THE ITALIAN RIVIERA

BY BOHUN LYNCH

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The Italian Riviera.

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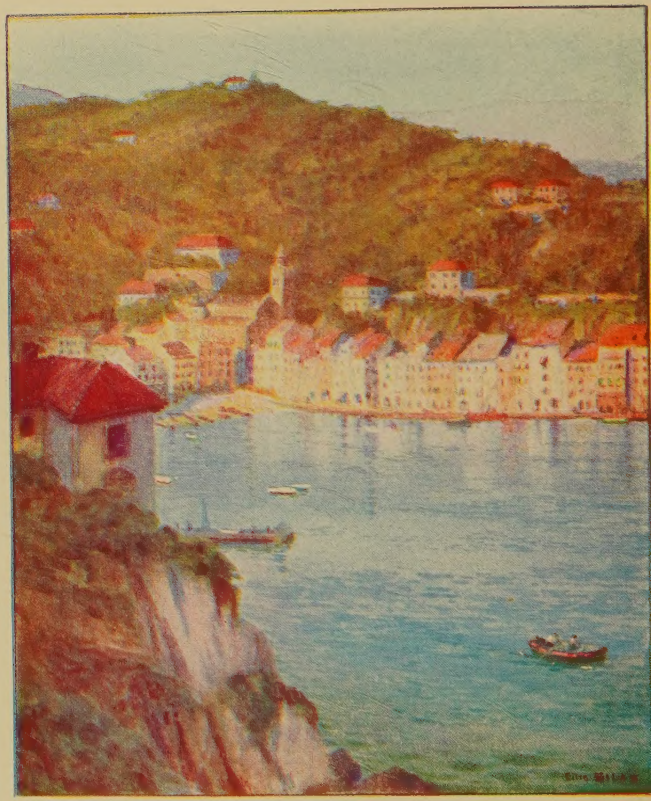

PORTOFINO
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THE KIT BAG TRAVEL BOOKS

THE ITALIAN RIVIERA

ITS SCENERY, CUSTOMS, AND FOOD
WITH NOTES UPON THE MARITIME ALPS

BY BOHUN LYNCH

WITHDRAWN

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FIRST EDITION

IN MEMORIAM

W. T. BEEBY

PREFACE

In the following pages I have attempted, by describing a personal tour, to supply information which, it is hoped, will be of use to others who follow that route or who wish to spend a holiday at any of the places mentioned. This route is through the Italian Alps between Mont Cenis and Ventimiglia, and thence along the Riviera to Spezia and Pisa.

The great majority of visitors to Italy go there in order to see pictures and sculptures and Roman and medieval buildings; and for that purpose they stay in Florence, Siena, Rome, or Venice, all of which places are outside the scope of this volume. People are attracted to the Italian Alps and Liguria—otherwise the Italian Riviera—by the climate and the scenery. This part of the country is eminently suitable for leisurely and unexciting, unexacting holidays, or prolonged residence. For in the showplaces, such as those named above, you are very prone to attempt to see too much in too short a time. There are practically no show places along the route over which I propose to wander. If there are things of interest and beauty you must look for them, not unaided, I hope, by this book.

For myself—since this is to be, in part, a personal narrative describing an actual walking-tour, which may be copied, and very easily amplified and improved upon—I had some slight acquaintance with two or three places upon my route before I undertook to cover it systematically. One of the reasons for this small adventure, or, rather, for the exact manner in which I set about it, was to contrast for my own satisfaction the evidence of much-travelled but generally quiet people with the idle and discontented chatter of many fussy ones who loudly declare, without reasonable experience or excuse, that all Italians are both dirty and dishonest. Their notion of Italians seems to be based upon those Neapolitan organ-grinders and ice-cream merchants who used to ply their trade in England, and whom the Italian Government has recently decided to discourage as derogating from the dignity of their race.

For mentioning this I have here to offer my apologies to my Italian friends, at the same time begging them in turn not to judge us in Great Britain by our popular restaurants, or by the ruder tourists who have visited their country, or by our sillier games, or by our Welshmen.

The personal narrative which follows is especially addressed to those who regard travel as an Adventure, not merely the physical shifting of one's body, with a varying degree of bustle and disturbance,

from one country to another; but a journeying of the spirit into new realms of experience. At the same time it is hoped that the book will prove equally useful to quiet folk in search of serenity and peace, and a perhaps familiar mode of life in unfamiliar surroundings.

The Italian Riviera and that part of the Alps which I have described appeal more than some other districts to people of small means. Apart from the expected expenses of hotels, there is really hardly anything to spend money on. In no part of Europe can the visitor have such a thoroughly enjoyable time at so small an outlay. Naturally, if you set about it you can spend more than is necessary; you can make a point of staying at none but the most luxurious hotels, you can move from place to place in your own car, which must be paid for, and which, as everywhere, demands its personal and unofficial taxation according to its size and make. But for moderate folk the expenses of a holiday or a prolonged trip in these parts of Italy need be very slight.

My thanks for much help are due to Signor F. Crosa, to the executors of the late Dr. W. T. Beeby, to Mr. and Mrs. G. L. Holdsworth, and to the officials of the Italian State Railways.

B. L.

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THE ITALIAN RIVIERA

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY TO A WALKING-TOUR

THE WEATHER—"EXCHANGE-HOGS"—A BRIEF WARNING AND A LONG REPLY—EQUIPMENT—PARCEL POST IN ITALY.

EVERY now and then there comes a period in your life when you are entirely sick of all usual occupations and diversions, and you know that, unless you are to bore all your friends with your discontent and, in leisure moments, bury yourself behind a newspaper in solitary gloom, you must have a radical change. Liver? Quite possibly. Staleness and overwork? How much more self-satisfying an explanation! We'll say, then, that it was staleness and overwork. A good round of golf twice a week? No, I draw a firm line at that and at Pekingese "spaniels." Tennis, cricket, rod and line? Not for now. It must be a real change. A walking-tour—yes, but in quite unfamiliar surroundings, somewhere remote, but easy of access, in some place where the food and the language and the whole way of life are different.

Circumstances conspired to make a few weeks in

Italy possible for me, and I would spend June there and the best of July. Rather hot? The hotter the better. And without further apology I had better say at once that from time to time I shall talk about the weather. "Foolish and proud people," writes Mr. Arthur Machen in a book of essays called *Dog and Duck*, "often reproach us with talking overmuch about the weather, and 'A fine day, isn't it, for March?' 'A very seasonable Christmas': these remarks, and many others like them, are supposed to indicate the depths of banality and stupidity on the part of the speakers. They can talk about nothing except the weather, say the proud and foolish ones." And he goes on to prophesy that in years to come we shall still be talking about the weather. "And rightly; for our English weather is a matter of perennial interest." And so, by comparison with ours, is the weather of other countries. As to the alleged excessive heat of Southern Europe in summer-time, that is a matter for individual taste. I have never known it uncomfortably hot on the Italian Riviera at any time of the year. I don't think that I am at all an exception in this regard. The climate being a very dry one, the hottest day is never oppressive as it often is in England, and as it is, as may reasonably be expected, in damp tropics.

Sadly I reflected that much as I have enjoyed previous visits to warm countries in the summer, it so happened that I had then never yet missed one

single day of the English winter. Still, here was the opportunity, and it seemed better to miss part of the English summer than not to miss English weather at all.

Another consideration that made Italy attractive to one whose pocket-book was lighter than his tobacco-pouch was the rate of exchange. It would be inhuman to disregard this advantage, but at the same time it is impossible to accept it without some fugitive but perfectly sincere apology to a country whose finances since the War have been on a less stable foundation than our own. I have seen too many "exchange-hogs," smugly totting up their pecuniary advantage over some trifling deal not to feel a little shame for such satisfaction as I have experienced from the same cause. If I buy an ice-cream for a penny for which you have just paid six-pence, being schoolboys of the same age, and I said "Yah!" or "Sucks to you," you would, I should hope, feel a little aggrieved. Decent English people do not say "Yah" to Italian hotel-proprietors or wine-merchants, but there are others whose whole deport-ment and mien are redolent of that offence.

Just before I left England, "Oh," a lady much addicted to the milder forms of travel said to me, "I should be very careful if I were you," and she added that warning about the personal habits of Italians to which I have already referred. Well, I am very careful; all English people are; they can't help

it. Carefulness or "Safety first" is one of the curses of our race. As to the lady's indictment, having some brief but very particular experience of Italians in the past, I stood up for them as manfully as possible in general terms. What I should have liked to say, but of course did not, was: "Madam, you have visited the cathedral of Milan, you have 'done' Venice, you have wintered in a flash hotel at Bordighera, you have complained about the bathrooms and appurtenances in all the show-places from Maggiore to Rome, you have loudly resented the attempts—wretched attempts, in all human likelihood—of Italian cooks to provide English meals, you have asserted your quite indubitable Britannic superiority at large, and you have treated Italian servants as you would treat English servants if you dared. You have patronized every Italian with whom you have come in contact, you have grossly flattered Italian ladies and gentlemen of title, who were hopelessly bewildered by your kind but preferential attention, you have over-tipped good-looking waiters—unaware that in three instances known to me they were considerable landed proprietors of ancient but impoverished lineage—and in your conversation with your British fellow-travellers you have forgotten that a number of Italians who have played violins in London or who acted as *liaison* officers with our Army on the Piave understand your speech. You have hoarded a little milk and sugar from your

breakfast and hidden them in your bedroom in order to save the devastating expense of ordering them again for tea; you've done as much as possible of your own washing in your basin, and have decorated your balcony with handkerchiefs and garments with the benignant reflection that, as this is a foreign hotel, it really doesn't matter what you do. You have demanded priority of attention from railway-porters over Italian ladies travelling by the same train and in just as great a hurry as yourself; you have helped to make harder the lot of the employees of Messrs. Cook, the Ente Nazionale Industrie Touristiche, and—this I don't grudge you—the customs officials at all frontier stations. In short, madam, you have behaved in such a way as would warrant your exclusion from polite society at home, where, however—and this is the oddest thing about you, madam—your manners have never exceeded the somewhat wide limits now current."

No, I said none of this, but with a heart fortified by rage against this good lady, a dislike for flash hotels, not less genuine because I can't afford them, and an extreme fondness for Italian food and unexploited byways, I left the train at the French village of Modane—where ordinarily you used to go through the customs on the way to Turin—heaved a ruck-sack on to my shoulders, stood quite still in the hot sunshine, and looked about me.

I was going to walk; at any rate, I would do a

good deal of walking, in case there was something after all in the liverish alternative to my complaint. At all events, I was not going to be troubled with luggage in the ordinary sense. A rucksack and a stick —think of the freedom of it! And the rucksack should contain the irreducible minimum of my requirements. I may say here that before I had walked forty miles in two days my views on the irreducibility of my minimum had considerably contracted. Foolishly, I had not consulted more experienced people about an outfit. I took, for example, far more linen than is necessary in a country where you can always get things washed "while you wait." One spare shirt, for example, would have been enough. I wore an old jacket and waistcoat of thin, strong tweed and the inevitable grey flannel trousers —the waistcoat was necessary, because I had started from England and proceeded across the North of France. In addition, to guard against cold and rain, I took a light mackintosh, which in the event I remember wearing but once, until I came to cross the Channel again on my return. In the rucksack were spare shoes, a pair of shorts, stockings, socks, pyjamas, and a jacket and trousers of unbleached linen, which combines with a fairly reputable appearance an extreme coolness and comfort in hot places. As I should have to do a certain amount of work *en route,* I took a rather generous supply of writing-paper and envelopes, but, having tried before

now to use the viler varieties of foreign ink, I still think that a bottle of the English sort is the last detail to be abandoned. With wisdom born of two days' sweated labour I eventually packed a considerable parcel of spare linen, paper, and oddments that I had believed to be indispensable, and posted them to a friend a hundred miles ahead of me.

In parenthesis, if you have never posted a parcel in Italy, and you have a day or two to spare, the experience will repay you. In the first place your parcel must be carefully wrapped up in very strong paper or sacking; every fold, every interstice, must be sealed with wax; if string be used either for tying the paper or stitching the sacking every stitch, every knot, must be sealed likewise. You have with you, let us say, a stump of brown wax; it is not quite sufficient to go round, three stitches remain to be sealed, and so you go out and buy more wax. This time you think it would be nice to have red wax—that lovely pillarbox scarlet which ennobles even the more private and less agreeable communications from the manager of your bank. You relight your candle, or burn your fingers with many matches, and you dab on the remaining blobs. You now take the parcel to the post-office. Oh, no, this won't do at all, the wax must be of one colour. The parcel must be made afresh. Moreover, if you do not happen to wear a signet ring, you must find some form of seal which will make a distinguishable mark wherever

you have put the wax. The wisest procedure is to take your parcel, if you must send one, to a neighbouring shop where the requirements of the Royal Post are understood. And to pay a young woman a few coppers for doing it instead. I forget how many times my parcel was refused at the post-office on one score or another, but I think I remember now everything that is necessary, including the forms of declaration that have to be filled up when the parcel has been accepted.

The route which I was to follow had been planned before. Several times I had passed in the train through the enchanting valleys which lie between Modane and Turin. I wanted to see more of them. The train has an irritating trick of plunging into one of innumerable tunnels just at the point where a church-tower, or a grove of chestnut-trees, or a wide, wild view of snow-capped mountains has aroused your excited interest.

There are magnificent military roads which run throughout that part of the Italian Alps, and motorists are therefore familiar with that country. But on foot I should see a great deal more than from a car, and if it occurred to me to go off the beaten track I could do so, and motorists could not. All the same, the next time I go wandering in that part of the world I shall take a donkey.

CHAPTER II

FROM MODANE TO MONT CENIS

THE START FROM MODANE—CANARIES FOR SALE—A MERRY COMPANY—THE ADVENTURE OF TRAVEL—LUNCH AT LANSLEBOURG—SLEEP BY THE WAYSIDE—BIRDS AND FLOWERS—CHOOSING AN INN—A TEA-POT FOR TWELVE.

THE most uncomfortable thing about good resolutions (which, to be pedantic, frequently turn out to be not good at all, but merely irksome) is that in real life they are broken with just exactly the facility which you would expect from the humorous references to them in the comic Press. The comic Press is not always right in such matters, though as a rule it has something to go on. I was to start on a walking-tour, and the first thing I saw on emerging from the station at Modane was an electric bus. And this bus was shortly due to start on a long uphill road to Lanslebourg, which was on my route to the top of the Mont Cenis Pass. Present opportunity was too much for past resolution. I had known nothing about the bus. It was very hot, my sleep in the train from Paris had been little, and at that broken, and—why should I make a burden of an ill-considered inten-

tion? I got into the bus. A bad start, I think I hear the stern moralist observe. Stern moralist, I love to flout you. It was a very propitious start.

A score or so of other people seemed to be of like mind. Among these was a little man with a cage of canaries, which he immediately tried to sell. Vulgarly speaking, there was nothing doing. Would I not buy even one, a little one? I had no use for even one, and that a little, canary. What should I do with a canary during a long journey on foot—yes, on foot? Teach it to carry my matches? So the little man shoved the cage under the seat, and, having no further use for me, talked placidly to his wife.

Quite suddenly, as the bus jolted on its rocky way through flower-strewn pastures and beneath immense towering crags, a young couple behind me burst into song. They were Italians, and, deeply as I resent the charges brought against their race by the lady addressed in the last chapter, I do frankly admit that Italian peasants—especially the women—sing quite abominably through their noses. Still, they were happy and gay, and I know nothing about music, and I'm not quite sure what I really like until I have heard it a dozen times, and that young couple fitted in very well.

A trailer for luggage had been hitched on to the back of the bus, and over the couplings of this at the first stop fresh passengers had to climb. Presently the bus was full, and hand-baggage filled the racks

and the spaces beneath the seats, and I even found that my knees were sharing a large wicker basket with those of its stout proprietor. After an hour or so, during which the road had followed a winding course along precipitous streamsides, higher and gradually higher, we met a cart coming in the opposite direction, and every one in the bus except me seemed to know the occupants. They leaned over one another at the open windows and called out greetings; for a little while even the couple behind me stopped singing. At the back of the bus there was a big box like a corn-bin, on which sat two old men in contented silence. At every stopping-place they had to get down and stand on some one's toes while the corn-bin was opened and a mail-bag withdrawn and hurled out of the door.

The stout peasant-woman beside me, with her neat bare head and her neat black dress, assured me that I had more *coraggio* than she had to go walking with such a heavy pack; but when I thought of the number of metres that I must climb between Lanslebourg and the top of the pass my *coraggio* somewhat wilted. Perhaps food would make a difference. Since Chambéry in the early morning, where I had a bowl of coffee and a roll, I had eaten nothing. It was now past midday, and I began to wonder what sort of inn there was at Lanslebourg.

After a little while the devil, having nothing better to do, got into the old lady's umbrella, which

started falling about, first over her feet, then over mine. I retrieved it for her, leaning over the wicker basket to do so, and then it fell forward. The old dear shook with laughter; certainly this was a manifestation of the devil himself, for no sooner had she righted the umbrella at her side again than it moved off sideways across the bus and poked itself into the cage of canaries, setting up a flutter.

I mention this not really very amusing incident at length because it started a train of thought which has some bearing on the psychology of foreign travel. On my journey from London to Newhaven I had sat next to an Englishwoman whose mackintosh kept sliding to the floor from the seat beside her. She had a nondescript parcel leaning against the back of the seat, and in front of that the usual small leather bag placed at an angle against the parcel. This formed an excellent chute or run for anything as slippery as a mackintosh. The good lady—that is, the incompetent she-ass—replaced her mackintosh five times just for the fun, you would think, of seeing it slide to the floor again. There was plenty of room for it on the rack. After the third time I even suggested that I might put it there for her. "No, no, don't trouble to do that; I shall be getting out soon" —when there was a good hour's non-stop run before us.

Well, the old peasant-woman in the bus from Modane was just as incompetent with her umbrella

as the English vicar's wife with her confounded mackintosh. Only, don't you see, she had upon her, and for me in that mood, the glamour of high adventure. Also, and this in extenuation, she was very jolly and tickled by the incident herself; the English lady in the English train had been about as unbending as was to be expected.

Lanslebourg at last! A poor place, I thought, just a double straggling row of big old houses of the Alpine kind, with heavy timbers and balconies piled with firewood and huge, protruding eaves. One of these seemed to be an inn (I discovered afterward that another establishment at the far end of the village would have seemed more unmistakably to be an inn). I went up two flights of stone stairs and through two big, empty, echoing rooms before finding a living soul. Then a woman appeared, wearing a sunbonnet, and silently (not sulkily) pointed to a table. And on that table she presently spread food for me, in this order—spiced ham, hot mutton, a sort of warm doughnut, then cold mutton with *mayonnaise,* and a really good purple wine. And would I like an omelette? This I thought unnecessary. I fed largely and leisurely at a cost of six or seven francs, and then proceeded on my way upward toward the frontier.

In these Alps it is easy though arduous to find short cuts. You see the road rising before you in terraces, as it were, with hair-pin turns, and where the

hillsides are not actually precipitous there is generally a path of sorts which runs straight up from terrace to terrace, thus saving miles.

One of the great points about a trip of this kind is that the primitive and essential requirements of man take their primitive place in his thoughts. Eating, drinking, and sleep become matters of the foremost importance, and not as (for those of us who are so fortunate) matters of course. In the mountains, at any rate, drinking is simple. Everywhere there are innumerable little streams from which you may safely quench your thirst, though you like to make sure that there are no houses near your stream above you. During the day sleep is easy and delicious by the wayside—all too easy, all too delicious; for you know that you must reach the next village or the next town before you can get a square meal and a bed. After my varieties of mutton and the rest of it at Lanslebourg, for example, and an hour's steady climb, it was extremely pleasant to choose a soft patch of dry, short turf well shaded by trees, to throw down my rucksack, and to sleep. And if I had brought food with me, and a sufficiency of blankets, and that donkey to carry them, I should no doubt have felt more romantically free than is at all usual in the civilized world. As it was, after half an hour's rest I must be up and on again, lest night should find me cold and hungry in high altitudes. Sleep out of doors at night, even on the Italian

Riviera in August, is, for anyone softened by years of city-dwelling, quite unwise. This I had discovered to my cost in the past. And the kind of food that you buy at the village shop and carry and eat by the roadside, though excellent for a change, is in some vague way unsatisfying at the end of the day. During a midday pause on the march a hunk of bread with cheese and an onion, or perhaps a few slices of sausage (preferably flavoured strongly with garlic), is first rate. But I like to think that when the day's work is done it is done. I suppose this too comes of the evil habit of living in cities. In the mountains, when I have walked my fair share of kilometres, I like to arrive somewhere, to have a good wash (all over, but in instalments, as you might say, for baths are rare), and to sit comfortably at a table before a plate that is hot, and is brought to me without effort on my part. I ask for no luxury, I seek no palatial hotel, and it is not eight or nine courses that I pursue; but a chair and a table with a cloth on it, a bowl of soup, one other dish, and plenty of fruit, and then coffee and tobacco and the long-drawn-out contentment of a lazy evening. To try, after a period of regular living in England, to become the hardened and complete tramp may sound charming, but it is absurd. The trampish way of life may be very well when you are toughened to it, but it must be approached by easy stages. And after all, why bother to toughen yourself? Life is

short; you are a busy man. And you just want a holiday. You can fall far short of true trampishness and yet enjoy a thorough change.

As I have said, the train journey between Modane and Turin gives you glimpses of great loveliness and grandeur, but, owing to many tunnels, glimpses only. On foot you can see it all. On the road up to the Col de Mont Cenis you are surrounded by enormous mountains, snow-patched toward the summits, while below they are, quite literally, carpeted with flowers. They seem somehow to be friendly mountains, enormous but kindly giants, not so glowering and grim and threatening as always seem to me the Dolomites of Cadore. In the higher altitudes there are masses of gentian—several kinds—of an ultra-heavenly blue, primulas, huge white and yellow anemones, pansies of all colours (acres of them), strong-scented pheasant-eye narcissi, forget-me-nots, cowslips, tulips, and innumerable small flowers of other kinds—some familiar, some not—which, with such homely old friends as pink and white clover, big and little daisies, and buttercups, make the roadside a blaze of colour, and the breeze a warm and lightly stirring fragrance. Here and there in wet patches were clumps of kingcups, and when I looked across the wide valleys the green mountain-sides looked exactly as though they had been dusted over with white sugar; there would be a huge central patch almost completely white, as though the top of a

castor had suddenly come off, and round and about it the white peppered among the rich grass. Everywhere blackbirds were singing, and larks and ortolans and nightingales.

Toward the top of the pass there are, at intervals, a number of refuges for climbers in winter, or for wayfarers overtaken by blizzards. These in the summer are for the most part closed and empty. Just before I reached the top of the Mont Cenis Pass an old man leading a mule-cart told me that I should find a night's lodging at Refuge No. 18, kept by one M. Piston. Here on the step were two or three brown and enormously healthy children. I was hungry and very tired. No other building was in sight, and the only other sign of man was the wide and admirable road.

I entered, but was disappointed. "All the men are sleeping in the hay to-night," Piston said simply. I was to understand that there was no other sleeping accommodation, and the several fellows who had come up from the valley to save the hay would leave no room for a stranger in the loft. Madam, however, put food before me—sardines, cheese, and excellent coffee.

Weary, and with the knowledge that but little daylight was left, I started out again, and tramped along the lonely road, hauling with my thumbs at the webbing of my rucksack, which had already rolled itself into ropes, cutting my collar-bone. But as I

went the wine-like air which came deliciously over the pass was wonderfully reviving, and at last I reached a wooden hut, at the door of which stood a young Italian soldier. To him I presented my passport, which he scrutinized closely, inquiring whether the photograph therein was really intended for me. Thus pleased and flattered, I left him (he did not trouble to examine my rucksack), and a minute later I passed a huge red-white-and-green signboard, which informed me that I was in the kingdom of Italy.

That in itself was good, but what at that precise moment was even better was the slope of the road, which zigzagged *downhill*. On either side enormous, snow-patched heights rose in an intense stillness; distant peaks here and there were yet caught by the sun, a few larks twittered and skimmed low over the remaining snowdrifts, and the myriads of wild flowers began to close their petals.

Presently a turn in the road brought a big lake in sight, with a few houses upon one side of it, and an infantry barracks. Two of the houses adjoining each other were modest inns—one much more modest than the other. I walked slowly and casually past, feeling far from casual, for in despite of the coolness of the evening at 7000 feet my pack was becoming more and more irksome.

The worst—or, at all events, the worst so far as

my present purpose is concerned—of the English lady against whom my heart turned is that she, with the help of her nieces and sisters, and possibly her husband and brothers, creates the conditions that she so much deprecates. At least, she creates the dishonesty; the dirt she refers to she for the most part imagines. So that apart from the show-places of Italy—not all of which, by the way, are spoiled yet—you do expect higher charges in the higher altitudes, in places, in fact, where people go for winter sports and so on. There is no dishonesty necessarily involved. Directly the usual tourist or pleasure-seeker begins to frequent a place, the people of that place quite naturally put a certain tax upon him. I can't think of a true parallel in England, but it is near enough if I suggest that it is natural for prices at Buxton or Eastbourne to be higher than the prices at—say—a small town in the middle of Gloucestershire. Personally, I prefer the small town in Gloucestershire to Buxton or (even) Eastbourne; just as I prefer a small, out-of-the-way village in Liguria to San Remo or Bordighera. There is nothing "superior" about this preference, but when I go to Italy it is Italy that I go to—not an "English colony," with bridge and golf clubs and roast beef and plum-pudding complete. I fully understand, appreciate, and in a way sympathize with the point of view of people who like to do just that, who go to

all the trouble, fatigue, expense of a long and frequently tedious journey in order at the end of it to do all those things which they could do a great deal better at Wimbledon or in the Isle of Wight. True, there is the weather; that must never be forgotten.

On the route that I had set myself to go it necessarily follows that I had to pass, not through Eastbourne exactly, but through certain places where tourists—English, American, German, and Italian tourists—find their pleasure and their change of air. I am referring just now to the Italian Alps, where people make winter sport, and where a stray wayfarer in the summer is something of a godsend. (Later, in July and August, holiday-makers come up to the mountains in greater numbers.) I have not found these places exactly spoiled nor the people dishonest, but they do know there that things are worth what they will fetch. Small blame to 'em.

So that, without going too far down into the slime of sordid detail, I have felt myself somewhat extravagant in such places in paying what in English money amounts to eighteenpence for a bed and as much as half a crown for a well-served and perfectly cooked meal.

Of course, between what one calls flash hotels and the roughest sort of village inn there are an infinite variety of shades.

At the little group of houses beside the Lake of Mont Cenis, as I went by, the more modest inn took

no notice of me, the other began to bustle. As I walked past it disgorged a waiter, actually a waiter with white shirt and a black tie. Then some one switched on a light to display a lounge with comfortable chairs in it. The waiter eyed me very nonchalantly and pulled at his waistcoat. But the chairs decided me. Comfortable chairs are unnatural in Italy; they are only imported to please foreigners, therefore the less modest of the two inns was less truly Italian, less natural, less spontaneous than the other. Back I strolled and entered that other.

And here indeed I found what I wanted: a large airy room delicately clean, with a sumptuously comfortable bed—indeed, I have never slept in an uncomfortable bed in Italy. A delightful *padrona,* with two maids, wished to do everything possible for me. It was a characteristic welcome to Italy.

I was already well fed, and there was only one thing between me and the completest bliss. From my rucksack I produced a small packet of tea. Could I—would they? By every means in the world, but they only had two tea-pots, one for one person and one for twelve. I had the thirst of twelve persons. Incidentally, it was a coffee-pot, but no matter. Just so much tea, and the water quite boiling. It was the sort of place where one could swing one's legs from the kitchen-table and superintend operations. With all the will in the world Latins cannot be made to understand the religiously exact observances upon which a

good brew of tea depends. They are better than they used to be, however, and in one case the balance is made fairly true by the usual English cook's conception of black coffee.

After drinking a quart or so of tea I went leisurely to bed, and slept solidly for ten hours.

CHAPTER III

FROM MONT CENIS TO SUSA

DOWNHILL—THE "CANTINA" AT BAR—A SHORT CUT—PERSISTING CIVILIZATION—AT VENAUS—SKETCHING—A GOOD PLACE—THE ALBERGO DEL SOLE—CHURCH INTERIORS—A WONDERFUL MEAL—THE WINE OF PIEMONTE.

MORNING, and the song of blackbirds and the scent of flower-laden mountain air. Of all the pleasures that one associates with holiday and change there are few to equal that of getting out of bed and going to the open window in the warm sunlight, and looking out upon a strange place. It had been falling dark the previous night when I arrived by the lakeside, and I had been far too much taken up with the choice between the two hotels to notice their surroundings. The Hôtel du Lac, as its name suggests, looks out across the unruffled surface of the water toward a south-western sky embattled with fantastic peaks.

While my coffee was being got ready I went out into the road, where I found a fluffy—quite roughly speaking, St. Bernard—puppy, who passed the time for me very pleasantly. Another time, besides that donkey I think I shall take a dog. It is all very well to depend upon chance acquaintances, but by the time

you have spent a night in the place and have reached a certain point of intimate understanding you have to be off again, and there is always a little pang at parting with a friendly cur, be he of ever so low degree. A good big Alsatian wolf, or, better still, a dog of a breed I have found in Italy said to be Sicilian (but I rather think really a mongrel), with ears which fall forward a little at the tips, like a collie, who hates all the human world except his master, and who talks to you intelligently, as good wolves do, would be exactly the right person to accompany one on a trip of this kind.

After breakfast I set off down the enormous valley.

The route which I had planned was along and down the Valle della Cenischia, from the top of the pass to Susa, thence to follow the railway back along the river Dora Riparia by way of Chiomonte to Oulx, then to Cesana and the Col de Sestrières (which is nearly as high as the Col de Mont Cenis), and down the Valle del Chisone to Fenestrelle and Pinerolo. Here I should be in the plains of Piemonte. (It will be noticed that many place-names in this part of the world are French, the district having once been part of the kingdom of Savoy.)

At about eleven o'clock I came to a hut by the roadside, where a customs officer looked at my passport and asked me where I was going. I happened to mention that I should be stopping for some days

at the little Riviera town of Diano Marina. "Ah," he said, "give my love to the flowers there." He said it with so gallant an air that I felt sure that it was not the flowers of Diano that he was really thinking about. For another hour I followed the downward-winding road, and called a halt at the little village of Bar, which excellently served its English name-part on my behalf. There in a little *cantina* I found a dark, clean, country-smelling room approached from the kitchen. This was furnished with a fine old dresser, stacked with pewter plates and brass candlesticks, while a shelf by the fireplace held burnished copper pots. The hearth itself was shadowed by a huge wooden hood of great thickness and age. Heavy chains hung down to support an enormous iron pot, and various implements of wrought iron, in constant use, made the place so complete that I felt it to be too good to be true. And yet it was true, and genuine. In England, if we see an inn kitchen so complete as that, we know very well that it is a fake, that "Ye Olde Hummbugge" or something of the sort will be inscribed on the sign above the door, and that the landlord is an agent for Messrs. Choses-Antiques, of the East Anglian Old Oak Manufacturies.

The window looked out upon a trim garden overlooking the valley, and my lunch was brought to me by a jolly girl with a red scarf round her head. Her mother, with a yellow scarf, sewed by the kitchen window. A small child busily swept the floor. The

whole place was tidy, clean, and self-respecting. Pieces of sandpaper were tacked here and there to the wall for one to strike matches on. The food was plain, abundant, wholesome, and cheap. This was the real thing, these—real people. In passing, it may be observed that *cantina,* which is an alternative name in the mountains for *osteria,* "small inn," farther south means merely a wine-cellar, or storehouse.

The sacred rites of property, which make short cuts an undertaking so perilous to one's dignity in England, are in Italy less sacred. I saw Susa miles before me down the valley, the copper-sheathed spire of the *duomo* glinting in the sunlight. I made a bee-line for Susa. Nobody objected; on the contrary, the three or four people whom I met, outside of villages, wished me a good journey. From Molaretto, where there are an inn, a few cottages, and yet another customs officer—who, however, did not trouble me—the road follows the line of the mountain-side many miles out of the direct route; but there is a steep and rocky pathway which descends through an enchanted forest of Spanish chestnuts to the little village of Venaus, which is only an hour's walk from Susa.

Once among the trees it was easy to forget the times in which we live, and what we comically call progress and civilization, and the pitiful attempts we make at home to evade them; and, indeed, everything but birds and flowers, trees and grass. After an hour or so of steep descent I found a miniature

lawn spread in the shade of a tree, closed in by rocks on all sides except to the north, where the still, towering mountains reared themselves up across the valley. Here I took off my pack, and sat down and lit a pipe; and presently from sitting I took to lying, and the pipe went out. It was as lovely a spot as I have ever seen, a little stream came down near by, sliding between low grassy banks and falling over rocks. Half an hour later, however, I woke up to realize that man was still vile, that progress and civilization persisted damnably at no great distance. For from below me came the sound of musketry, and peering through the trees I saw, far down at the bottom of the valley, targets set upon a rock wall. The Italian Army was getting ready for the next war.

At Venaus I stopped at a tiny *café* for a drink, and got rather a shock. With my chair at the door, and a notebook on my knee, I started to make a rough drawing of the church opposite. Quite suddenly a pleasant voice said in my ear, "Church steeeeple." It was something to have my intention recognized, and I found that the words used by the soft-footed daughter of the house were explained by her residence for some years in Wisconsin. All I knew of that state was contained in the song:

> My name is Jon Jonsen,
> I come from Wisconsin,
> And the people I meet
> Every day in the street,

They say, "What is your name?"
And I say:
My name is Jon Jonsen, *etc., etc.*

It goes on like that, or something like that, for ever. I didn't. Before leaving Venaus I drew two or three savage pencil lines across and across the church stee-eeple. I had given way to a horrid impulse, and that was the least I could do. Some time ago an artist friend of mine was going to spend a holiday in Italy. I asked him whether he was going to paint. "No, I am not," he said very emphatically. "Can't there be one person who leaves beautiful places alone, and doesn't try to spoil 'em by shoving 'em down on canvas or paper or something?" And he is a person of some distinction. But there are people, even a great many, who can't leave Italy alone in that respect. They have taken lessons in what they always call "sketching." They sketch this or that scene busily, and then hang the pink and blue results in expensive gilt frames in pink and blue drawing-rooms. The "colours" of Italy have an irresistible attraction for the hardened sketcher. They give him an opportunity, as he conceives, for the use of bright pigments, especially cobalt blue and crimson lake. And yet when it comes to the point the sketcher is usually found to have been lacking in daring, for he almost always understates the colour, and, having learned his pleasant little lessons in the drawing-room school of English amateur art, he takes in-

finite pains in the presentation of atmospheric effects, which are never seen in Italy. He has never learned to look for himself. He knows the rules of sketching. He obeys them. Well, I suppose it keeps him quiet and contented.

How instant is one's appreciation of a good place! I don't mean a merely convenient or comfortable place, but one in which you immediately feel at home. Twice or thrice I had caught a fleeting glimpse of Susa from the train, and ever after I had wanted to go there. I was not disappointed. It was not just that I was tired and hungry and (yet again) thirsty, for I have known these sensations at places which I hated at sight, and which remained loathsome to me. But about Susa there was an incommunicable rightness which made me feel happy even before I had dumped my rucksack at the Albergo del Sole. It was six o'clock in the evening, I had tramped steadily all day—well, but for periods of eating and drinking and rest—when I came into this enchanting old town. It is quiet, yet gay. The Albergo del Sole is extremely comfortable, yet cheap; the people jolly, unspoiled, anxious to please. Apart from the picturesqueness that most old Italian towns have—the tall houses, the many balconies, the narrow lanes, the little shops beneath arches, and the hundred and one delightful glimpses of courtyards and gardens from beneath dark entries and deserted alley-ways—apart from all this there is much of what I call profession-

ally architectural interest in the town. The *duomo* has a particularly fine tower and spire, which, as I have said already, being sheathed with copper, gleams like gold. Regarding the interior, the less said the better. It is always a matter of amazement that the descendants of people who invented such architectural beauty, such simple and sometimes austere magnificence, should take a delight in decorating their old churches within in a manner befitting the gin-palace or the cinema. The crude, and withal costly, vulgarity of these interiors beggars description. For the observance of Whit-Sunday I found another church, I remember, draped with enormous curtains of fine crimson satin brocade edged with gold, which, with the raw colouring of the new frescoes, the bespangled Madonnas, and the *nouveau baroque* columns on either side of the altars were sheerly revolting. There was one happy exception, which I shall come to in due course. The *duomo* of Susa is not as bad as some of them; that is all that I can say. And, after all, this complaint is a very commonplace matter. In all Latin or Latinized countries you will have the same fault to find. And I don't know really that the fault is so very terrible after all. There is something so very *naïve* and childlike about these meretricious gauds. They are spontaneous and loving, which is more than can be said for the definitely cultured adornment of the professedly "artistic" church at home.

Photo Alinari

SUSA: ARCH OF AUGUSTUS

Photo E. N. I. T., London

SUSA: THE MEDIEVAL GATEWAY

The hideousness of the interior at Susa is amply atoned for by the exquisite carving of the panelled door on the south side. It is of an elaborate, late Renaissance design, bleached by sun and weather, and entirely satisfying.

Susa was walled by the Romans, and much of the wall remains, with a fine old double arch at the western gate. Beyond it there is a good solitary arch of the time of Cæsar Augustus, while near the *duomo* you enter the town through what remains of an early medieval castle.

The river Dora runs at a tremendous speed through the middle of Susa, and on one side of it are clustered the leaning and top-heavy balconies of the poorer quarter. Opposite, there is a quiet road sheltered by trees, along which much-decorated officers swagger on their way from the barracks to dine at the inn.

The name of the landlord of the Albergo del Sole was—I hope is—Giachino Giacinto (Jack Hyacinth), and is a poem in itself. His wife, remembering the habits of the Special Correspondent who had passed through Susa during the War, and had recommended me to her friendly better half, immediately suggested that a hot bath would relieve my stiffness. Great cans of boiling water were taken up to my room, and refreshed, changed, and ravenous I sat down to as admirable a meal as any I remember: soup—at a place of corresponding size and dig-

nity in England the soup would be made by pouring a good deal of water that has been hot upon something out of a packet, something which saves the housewife's time, something like that greater abomination called tinned salmon, which saves the housewife's gas-bill, something emetically damnable. This was *soup*—and then a large dish of grilled trout. *O San Pietro! Santa Caterina!* what strawberries for dessert!

"How disgusting!" my puritanical friends say. "Just like a greedy little boy, and there is nothing so horrid as a greedy child. As for me, you know, my dear, anything does. I don't mind what I eat. A little bread and cheese is amply sufficient—what more *could* one want? And, oh, if you don't think me very greedy, a glass of milk, a small glass——"

Yes, I know all about that. And the red wine was generous and heartening. Italian wine is what wine-merchants in their catalogue call a good beverage. It really is. It is not the kind of wine that you roll over your tongue with the ecstatic appreciation of the connoisseur. You do well, in journeying from place to place, not to order especial brands, but to content yourself with the produce of the local crushing. At the majority of stopping-places along my route I should have ordered particular brands of wine in vain. You have your choice of red or white. In one part of Liguria there is also a very pale pink wine, said to be made from an American grape.

Local wines vary considerably in potency and in flavour, the vine being an extraordinarily sensitive plant to variations in soil and temperature. But the wines of Piemonte are better than most, that which comes under the fairly general name of Barbera being specially rich and fragrant. And, if you want another excuse (where one will serve), these beverage wines are definitely wholesome and nourishing.

CHAPTER IV

FROM SUSA TO CHIOMONTE

DOGS—THE HOME OF THE SACRISTAN—THE TRAGEDY OF THE SPARROWS—THE OLD WASHERWOMAN—"PRETTY SMART CHAPS."

On the following day I was expecting to be joined at Susa by a friend. But as I sat alone outside the inn after dinner that night I determined that, whether he liked it or not, I would spend another night at Susa. Why not? What was the good of dashing ahead as though to break some ridiculous record? When you come to a good place stop there for a bit and have a look round.

Well-fed idleness on its own account is great fun. I sat at a table overlooking the little *piazza,* and watched the people—neatly dressed women, officers striding slowly by with their swords tucked high under their arms, boys on bicycles, and the oddest collection of dogs I've ever seen. They make a great fuss of dogs in Northern Italy, and, in despite of everything you commonly hear to the contrary, treat them with great kindness. But *mésalliances* in the kennel are commoner than in England; their results more marvellous. And in their kindness the Italians,

realizing that a thick-coated dog may find life burdensome in the hot weather, clip them and shave them, whatever their breed or mingling of breeds, in the manner of poodles. Among other characters in the *piazza* wandering vaguely about in search of adventure, or following some entrancing and probably pungent scent, I saw a small dog about the size of a fox-terrier, but with a foxy head; his body and legs had been shaved, but a yellow lion's mane had been left about his neck, and a thick tuft at the extreme end of his long tail. Another had the body of a dachshund, the head of a Sealyham, but the feet of the size of, and the tail of the proportion of, a Clumber spaniel. A good deal of his body too was shaved, but his short, thick legs were darkly fluffy. He all but caught a very stringy and miserable cat, who, however, contrived to elude him at the end of the bridge across the river. Cats in Italy are seldom well cared for. They are like the Armenians; you don't know whether they have been made insufferable by ill-use, or whether they are ill-used because they have always been insufferable.

At the next table to me an old labourer sat eating an ice and playing with a puppy. There was another point of view for you! It made me think of a similar scene in Athens many years before, when I had noticed a shepherd who had evidently come down from the mountains for the day sitting at a *café* eating Turkish Delight and drinking water. Far be it

from me to say that ices and lakoums are preferable to the mild or bitter beer of our home-bred Hodge, but I do say that Hodge's counterpart in Attica or Piemonte is a fresh and interesting study. And when I see him innocently indulging the sweetness of his tooth it makes me realize that I am far away from home.

The first thing I saw next morning bothered me considerably. I was walking round the town, and came upon a drawing on a wall. Neither head nor tail could I make of it at first, until suddenly I realized that somebody had leaned out of a window to draw (quite skilfully, and with a piece of charcoal), and a head it was that I saw drawn upside-down. This was near to the prison, which, at any rate outside, was a simple and pleasing old house with picturesquely barred windows. The prison overlooked a delightful little grassy lane, which wound between high walls, about the south side of the town. I don't think that, however simple, the prison was likely to have been very pleasing inside; but I did not see the inside—of that one.

Later, when I had been joined by my friend, we went to the *duomo,* where we found a swivel-eyed sacristan to lead us up the tower. The campanile was, literally, the fellow's home. After ascending for some way in the darkness we came upon a half-opened door which gave upon a roughly furnished room.

Here a stout *signora* was busy with a frying-pan, while a litter of small infants played upon the uneven floor. A few steps higher, and we came to the place where these good people kept their fowls and rabbits on the cathedral roof. From the belfry the sacristan pointed out all that might be seen in the surrounding valley, just as his rival at St. Paul's used proudly to show the Crystal Palace from the Golden Gallery.

Just beneath us was the medieval gateway already referred to. Once, when he was a younger man, the *sacristano* had climbed up there to catch some sparrows for his saint's day's dinner; sparrows being to him a peculiar delicacy. He had followed a most hazardous route over the crumbling arch, and his faithful cat came with him. When he got to the nest he found that the sparrows were yet too young, and so he decided to postpone the pie. But the cat did not view the matter in the same light, and, having learned the way from her master, made another expedition on her own account. It was very sad.

The manners of the swivel-eyed sacristan were perfect. After we had come down to earth again he disappeared while we hunted our pockets for change, and we had to go and find him. He and the saddler who charged me something under sixpence for extensive repairs to my rucksack decided me that the inhabitants of Susa were not greedy.

Later, as I was passing one of the shaded places by a brook where washing is done, an old dame called out to me to rescue a collar which was floating away downstream.

"You have a stick," she observed.

That is one of the things that make the Italian peasant such good company. They have no sort of desire to display their (trebly adjectival) independence; they don't mind being under an obligation to you, or thanking you for a trifling service. Neither by word nor manner do they tell you that they are as good as you. They just don't bother about it. There is no brag, no affectation about them, no self- or "class"-consciousness. I hasten to remark that this is not political bias on my part, but a mere annotation of social preference.

The uphill road which, roughly, follows the railway from above Susa to Oulx passes through country of quite extraordinary beauty. At every turn the scene varies; now towering peaks rose immediately before us, clad in pine-forests; now a bend in the road opened up a narrow valley richly cultivated; now and again we looked back to the snowy heights to the north of Susa and vast grey precipices which were cleft in two by violet shadows.

My companion was half Italian and half English, but, living in Italy as he did, he was not perfectly bilingual. He was, for example, lazier even than the average Englishman at finding the right, or at all

events the adequate, word for any given meaning. The most exquisite scenery, to which he was by no means insensitive, was always "pretty smart"; just as Mr. Thomas Hardy, Herr Beethoven, and Sir Peter Paul Rubens were "pretty smart chaps." If you were pretty smart, in fact, you had reached a pretty high level in my friend's estimation. This habit of speech was not one of which there was the smallest hope of curing him. "Heaven above, man!" I would say, looking back at vast shapes and brilliant colours, and struggling manfully to avoid the similes of precious stones. "You call that pretty smart? You called Juliet pretty smart last year." "She is pretty smart," he replied very seriously. Giovanni is too big and calm a man with whom to pursue argument beyond moderate bounds. And there is much to be said for him on that point. It is better, I think, probably to call the *Gioconda* and *The Hound of Heaven* and the frieze of the Parthenon pretty smart and be done with it than to go fumbling all down the road for ever and ever, in at Roget and out at Murray, in agonized and futile search for the right word; futile, because by the time you have found it some fashion in letters or some critical pundit will have decreed that right word wrong.

The road, then, up the Dora Riparia is undeniably smart.

We reached Chiomonte about noon, and lunched at a modest *albergo*. When breakfast consists of

coffee, often as far as I am concerned without the accompanying roll, noon finds me somewhat peckish. And in the generous heat of an Italian summer I ask for no food more suitable, more greatly to be enjoyed, than the typical Italian luncheon.

CHAPTER V

FROM CHIOMONTE TO OULX

ABOUT ITALIAN LUNCHEONS—ANTIQUITIES OF CHIOMONTE—BLISTERS—EGGS WITHOUT CUP OR SPOONS—MERRY RAILWAYMEN.

On alternate days, as a rule, the main and preliminary dish at lunch is most succulently cooked rice called *risotto,* made with or without small pieces of flesh or fowl, and drenched in one or another countless varieties of cunningly contrived sauces; or *past' asciuta,* or dry *pasta* (which it isn't, but so-called to distinguish it from *pasta* used in soup), which consists of those pipes or tapes which we in England call *macheroni*—though we don't spell them like that. *Macheroni* is a word which I have never heard used in Northern Italy. Strictly speaking, they form one species of the genus *pasta,* which is made simply of flour and water, to which an egg is sometimes added. The names vary according to the shape —*signorini, cravatte* (made like little bows), *tagliatelli, cappeletti, macheroni, vermicelli, spaghetti,* and so on. The nearest approach to *past' asciuta* in England (and how far that is!) is macaroni-cheese. This we will not discuss. *Past' asciuta* is made with

sauces, or simply with butter and a dusting of grated Parmesan cheese. I forgot for the moment that even the popular restaurant at home purveys a substance known as "spaghetti and tomato"; further, the said substance can be bought ready cooked in a tin (which just requires heating in a saucepan of hot water, and turning out on to the dish. No trouble, no trouble at all, ough!). By all means have a little *purée* of tomato in your sauce, but a thousand other things besides, and do not overdo the tomato; it is the thousand other things, freshly gathered by children from the hillside and meticulously chopped upon a wooden board with a razor-edged half-moon, that are really important. Now and again, to break the alternation of *pasta* and *risotto,* there are three or four other dishes which deserve honourable mention: one of these is to me the most delicious of all. We will keep that till last. There is what the Italians call fried milk, which is a glorified white sauce flavoured with onion, allowed to grow cold, and then fried. This is also used as a pudding, less the onion and plus a dusting of vanilla sugar. *Gnocchi* is of twofold persuasion, the Neapolitan and Roman. The Neapolitan sort is made with potato and flour rolled into balls and thrown into boiling water, and served with sauces. Roman *gnocchi* is made with semolina and milk in small cakes fried or baked, and served with cheese. Semolina is also used plainly boiled, and eaten with similar sauces to those used with *past' asciuta.*

The staple food of the Piemontese peasants is *polenta,* or ground maize. This is cooked in various ways, is extremely nourishing, but inclined to be stodgy. And now we come to the food of gods, who graciously ordained that we miserables here below shall sometimes taste of its ineffable quality. You make, or rather your patient cook spends a day making, little envelopes of thinly rolled paste, containing finely chopped meat, herbs, vegetables, and eggs; the receipts vary. These are called *ravioli.* A healthy man, but modest guest, takes, perhaps, a dozen at the first helping, and perhaps two dozen at the second. (It is half-past seven; it is a cold winter's evening, my mouth waters like that of any spaniel. I can say no more. Oh, yes, I can, though. A friend of mine once announced his intention to visit Liguria, and mentioned the name of a populous and popular resort. He further informed me of the hotel where he was going to stay, and where he had been before. The name was unfamiliar to me. "Italian food?" I asked.

"Good Lord, no!" he said, with horror. "No muck of that kind. Best French cooking."

French cooking stands in need of no outburst from my friend or from me. But the poor fellow didn't know what blasphemy he uttered before that. I doubt very much if he did get the best French cooking at the Hôtel Splendide-Glorieuse. But I do know that if he had gone to the eating-house half-

way down the alley on the left, with his feet in the sawdust and his elbows (I hope) upon a bare wooden table, he might have eaten *ravioli* of the most sublime.)

The second luncheon dish of fish or meat varies far more with the capabilities of the individual cook. Special commendation should go to *scaloppini con Marsala,* which consists of small pieces of veal cooked in Marsala sauce. For this dish, more than most, you have to be sure of your cook. *Cotoletti alla Milanese* are very thin slices of veal fried with egg and bread-crumbs; it is a bad cook who cannot make them presentable. Ordinarily you are not offered more than two courses at a meal; a morsel of cheese hardly counts, except that you cannot possibly appreciate what Gorgonzola is until you have tasted it, as it were, in its native country. Much of the Gorgonzola in England, like Gruyère, is said to come from Scandinavia: it is undoubtedly "matured" by the aid of copper wire. Another excellent and milder cheese is *bel paese,* which is best described as a cross between Gruyère and Gouda, with a far distant relationship to Camembert. It is cheese for eating in large quantities when you are hungry.

Then there is fruit and black coffee. Personally I take the fruit seriously, particularly at that time of the year when strawberries still persist and cherries are ripe. Of cherries I shall have more to say later on.

After lunch we set out to explore Chiomonte. Apart from the usual picturesqueness of an old Italian village, the straggling narrow thoroughfares, the archways, *loggias,* and carved protruding beams, there are here three definite "sights": the sixteenth-century fountain, the surrounding trough of which is carved with the arms of the French family who lived there in bygone times; the panelled doorway of an old bishop's palace, with slender Lombardic columns on either side of it; and the church-tower built in 1482, in the Romanesque manner. These are all impressive examples of the beauty of simplicity. Inside, the church—owing, I suppose, to the poverty of the place—is undecorated and delightful. The balusters of the altar-rails are heavy and simply turned; there are two galleries, one above the other, and the upper one has the flat balusters one associates with certain English houses of the seventeenth century. There are one or two old confessional-boxes, and practically no gewgaws at all.

The women of Chiomonte still wear a definitely local costume, consisting of white cap fitting closely about the face, with a black bodice and short sleeves, a coloured apron, and a distinctive shawl.

In this neighbourhood the traveller is ill-advised if he shows any signs of possessing either a camera or a notebook. It is a frontier district, and frontiers are armed with forts. That afternoon we passed a big one, not unpleasing in appearance, flat, and grimly

unobtrusive on a mound in the middle of the valley, and, one would say, before the days of aëroplanes, a very awkward place to tackle. At Exilles, the next village we came to, a young *carabiniere,* demanding our passports, asked us whether we were doing this for a bet or for pleasure; and when I told him he laughed. Just at that moment, being in considerable pain from a bad blister, I was not sure that he was wrong. So disreputable a stranger with so heavy a pack roused his suspicions; but laughter, and the persuasive eloquence of Giovanni, and the universal reputation of the British for madness, pacified the lad, and we went on. In any tight corner or otherwise an ability and the disposition to jest in the native language and at your own expense, rather than at an official's, is calculated to relieve anything approaching a situation. Presently for rest and refreshment we entered an inn, so dark in contrast with the brilliance outside that it was a long time before we could make out our surroundings. Like the *cantina* at Bar, the place was lavishly furnished with old copper and brass, and our drinks were brought to us on a pewter tray which had certainly been made before 1700.

At Salbertrand, the next station before Oulx, I surrendered to the blister and determined to wait for a train. In the village there we had a very primitive meal at an almost excessively primitive tavern. There were two of these, neither seemed overpoweringly

SUSA: THE VALLEY OF THE DORA RIPARIA

Photo Brogi

Photo C. E. Beeby

A FRANCISCAN MONASTERY IN THE HILLS

attractive; we tossed a coin which decided us. (If we had waited till we got to the station we should have found near it a more civilized establishment. But to civilized people primitive experience is occasionally worth purchase.) The peasant *padrone's* resources were meagre. He found bread, cheese, and eggs. These we boiled for ourselves in a pan on a spirit-stove set before us on the table. As a test of ingenuity, I recommend the experience of eating a lightly boiled egg—for nothing short of dire necessity will induce me to eat one boiled hard—without an egg-cup or spoon. The proceeding is a little undignified, and not at all in accordance with the strict correctness inculcated in me at a tender age by my nurse. However, I ate several eggs, and wasted not a drop.

Outside the station an old woman was leading a sheep by a cord. Presently from the station-master's house emerged a fat white puppy, more exactly like Mr. G. E. Studdy's notorious Bonzo than I should have believed possible. With a rolling gait but remarkable speed he hurled himself at the sheep and worried its hind-legs. The old lady was greatly perturbed; neither by menaces nor kicks could she dislodge the little brute. Giovanni came to the rescue, and seized him by the scruff of the neck as the sheep on his cord fled frantically round and round his old mistress.

Presently down the hill from the village came a

tiny cart bearing a young man who had lost his legs in the War; it was drawn by an enormous crop-eared brute of the Great Danish tribe. He cast a brief disgusted glance at Bonzo, noting with obvious disfavour that while youth is no doubt a reason for folly, small puppies are only too ready to make it an excuse.

Some time before our train was due a goods-train drew to a halt, and the driver and various brakesmen and guards very properly went off for a drink. After half an hour or so a telephone message came through to the station-master ordering the train on, but the good fellows, as I have observed, were comfortably settled in the *osteria* some distance away. The station-master thereupon climbed into the electric engine and blew the whistle. That presently brought the driver to a sense of his responsibilities, and he ran up and promptly started the train; the various brakesmen and guards (each car had its man to work its individual brakes) followed and hopped on to the train as it gathered speed outside the station. Myself, I thought that budding officials of the N.U.R. would have done the job with more dignity, but much less fun. Italians know as well as any other race how to relieve the tedium of work and to fill up time. Nor do they fail, as far as I can see, in getting things done.

CHAPTER VI

FROM OULX TO PINEROLO

A GOOD INN—OVER THE COL DE SESTRIÈRES—FLOWERS AND WOODS—A BICYCLE RACE—THE HONEY OF PRAGELATO—A MERRY EVENING AT FENESTRELLE—BY BUS AND TRAM—ROLLS AND BUTTER.

You know the people who accuse their friends of stealing their matches sooner than take the trouble to ransack their own pockets? Well, the man who woke me up at 3 A.M. at Oulx was of that sort. I had gone to bed early, pleasantly tired. The bed was exceedingly comfortable, the window was wide open. Suddenly I began dreaming of some horrible catastrophe which involved a most ghastly din. I woke, the dream ended, the noise went on. I went to the window. In the dim light a man just below me was violently rattling the iron gates of the yard at the side of the inn. The gates were loosely hung, but firmly fastened. The row seemed to me excessive, and I racked my brains to remember a really pungent Italian phrase for "Go to blazes!" I had got the most important of the three words on the tip of my tongue (recalling that it is much the same in English, French, Italian, Welsh, and Greek), when the man

stopped trying to force the gate, went across the yard, returned with a key, unlocked the gate quietly, and departed.

I went back to sleep.

Giovanni was not well acquainted with the route which we were following. He was, as you might say, like a Kendal man who has once spent a short summer holiday motoring in Cornwall. So I was free to make my own discoveries, and was not likely to be hampered by any prejudices which he had formed in the matter of inns or places to stay at. On the previous evening when we arrived at Oulx we had found just across the road from the station a most excellent little hotel, the Albergo Commerciale. We'd been recommended thither by Jack Hyacinth at Susa. And the recommendation of so good a landlord as he was good enough for us. It is entirely unpretentious, but really comfortable; the cooking is superb. Oulx is a centre for rock-climbers and later for winter sports, and Signor Uzzo, the proprietor, thoroughly understands how to treat people who like things as they like 'em. Throughout my tour, discounting the appetite induced by hard exercise, never did I sit down to any meal that was not well cooked or pleasantly, if sometimes roughly, served. Moreover, it was the rule that landlord and servants alike should give one a jovial welcome.

It was from Oulx that I sent off my parcel of clothes, and thus spent the morning. On our return

to the *albergo* the cook came to consult us about lunch. What exactly would we like, and how would we like it? If that kind of homeliness is unpleasing to you, go to a large hotel of the international type, where a serviceable imitation of French cookery is observed. No one there will ask you for your personal preferences.

There is always a wind blowing at Oulx. The place stands high, 3500 feet to be exact, but is at the point where three huge valleys meet. It is a good jumping-off place for expeditions, or for serious climbing, but has little individual interest in itself. After lunch we took the motor-bus, which runs twice daily from Oulx over the frontier to Briançon, as far as Cesana, about ten miles, or a little less. Three enormous and splendid young men sat behind us, as disreputably clothed as I was, with rucksacks also, and with ice-axes and alpine ropes. Evidently they were going to engage in hair-raising exploits on the craigs which rose more precipitously on either hand as each mile of road sped by. The country in this district of the Italian Alps is of extreme grandeur. Huge snow-patched pinnacles and spires of rock jut out from the pine-forests, while below these are park-like, steeply sloping expanses of brilliant turf, with scattered trees and myriads of flowers. Down below the blue rivers twist about among the rocks, and are fed and refed by fiercely running tributaries, which dash down narrow and precipitous gorges.

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Cesana did not impress us favourably. I don't know why, for we only stopped there long enough to get a drink from an ice-cold fountain before starting out on the uphill track toward the Col de Sestrières. An excellent military road leads over the pass, whose longer zigzags we sometimes eluded by taking steep, short cuts. Here, as we climbed high, the views opened out, and we could see more of the mountains than at any point since leaving Mont Cenis. The road was lonely, and during the rest of that day we met but three men. One of these was lying asleep in a sort of hammock slung under a mule-cart. The mule, not such a stupid animal as he is usually supposed (though quite as mulish), seemed quite happy. But it occurred to me to wonder whether he really knew the right side of the road on which to pass a car if one came that way.

Behind us, above Cesana, a great fort had been erected on the very crest of the mountain-top, so that, black against the sky, it looked for all the world like the battlements on some giant's castle in a fairy-story. Looking at those immense and regular blocks of stone set against the western sky seemed somehow temporarily to deprive one of a sense of proportion. The sunlight glittered on a wire up which trolleys are hauled to the mountain-top.

As we went on, to the right and before us rose tremendous peaks, range upon range, with lonely farms

perched here and there upon the lower slopes. In the huge park-like spaces of short grass, and by the roadside, there were even more wild flowers than I had seen in the neighbourhood of Mont Cenis—Madonna lilies, gentian, narcissi, catmint, forget-me-nots, primulas, spiræa, cowslips, sandfoil, orange and red tulips, and others of yellow and copper colour, wild roses, and many flowers to which I could put no name, growing not in clusters, but in myriads. Giovanni, declaring that they were very smart, gathered me a large buttonhole, and decorated his hat like the font in a village church at Harvest Thanksgiving. We got to the top of the pass at about 6.30 P.M., where we found a large but quite empty hotel, frequented in the winter by *skiatori,* and near by a small hut (containing a telephone), where in the unfashionable seasons one is fed. Later in the summer, we were told, holiday-makers from the cities would fill the big hotel. In the meantime it was immensely ugly and depressing. There is not another house within several miles, and, as with other monopolists, the prices at this place are relatively high. One learns to regard thirty lire for dinner, bed, and morning coffee as something extravagant. Dinner at the telephone-hut was excellent and plentiful. I particularly recall the *minestrone,* a broth, frequently given to you also at midday, which contains, as we say, a little bit of everything—*pasta,* vegetables of all

kinds, herbs, with a basis of good, honest stock. *Minestra* is the same sort of thing, but has fewer ingredients.

The following morning we rose early, and set off in blazing sunshine downhill once more toward Fenestrelle. It was Sunday, and the journey was not so lonely as on the previous day; for my taste not lonely enough. There was a great bicycle race over a route starting from and finishing at Turin, and passing through Susa, Oulx, Cesana, Sestrières, Fenestrelle, and Pinerolo, from the plains through the mountains and back again, a distance of over two hundred kilometres. All day long as we passed down the road from one ancient and enchanted village to another swarms of contorted forms in brilliant jerseys, with huge numbers sewn upon their backs, reeled by us. Some were provided with bottles, carried in their pockets with rubber tubes attached to them, so that they could drink without dismounting. The competitors were followed in many instances by car-loads of partisans, who yelled encouragement and then stopped for prolonged refreshment (as is the way with partisans) before going ahead and overtaking the bicyclists again. The men rode without outer tyres, but carried a spare tube fastened to the saddle. Some time later an Italian friend told me that he had once competed in a race over this course, and that the man who did it twice must indeed be tired of life. The strain during the long

uphill journey to Sestrières is prodigious. Toward the end of the day the backers of the competitors in their motors grew more numerous, while children at the wayside, men and women, cheered on the stragglers.

The two principal villages that we passed through that day were Traverse and Pragelato. Both are justly famous for their honey and the picturesque costumes of the women. The latter include the most engaging little embroidered caps, elaborately pleated fanwise at the back. The houses are of the usual Alpine type, and are not especially interesting. At both villages I saw clothes-pegs in use made from forked branches of trees, stripped of bark and bleached by the sun, each prong being quite a foot in length. They serve their purpose, and also to make one reflect that the extras of civilization (the pleated caps, for example, to say nothing of electric light) may go hand in hand quite comfortably and as a matter of course with the most primitive accessories.

Pragelato was especially bedecked that day; for not only was it a Sunday, but there was also a village wedding of some importance. The landlord of the inn was the father of the bridegroom, and could not, therefore, find time or food for a stranger. He was polite, but in a hurry. There was to be a great feast in and about his garden. I wished rather that we had been friends of the family; for whatever we may think of such affairs in our own country, a foreign

village wedding is such a very merry business. There is a frankness of joviality which finds but an anæmic substitute at home. As I glanced at the long trestle-table all a-glitter with innumerable tumblers, and when I thought of the oceans of wine that were presently to be quaffed, I felt rather "odd man out." So we went and bought sausage and bread at a little shop, and some thick honey spooned out on to a piece of grease-proof paper. Then we went away and had a feast all to ourselves by the side of the river.

Reader, an egg without a spoon is, as I have said, tiresome; but honey without either knife or spoon is the devil. While there is much of it you scoop it up with a crust; but when there is only a little left on the paper, and that too good to be wasted, you take the paper in both hands, pull it taut, and lick it, south to north, pressing the paper against your tongue. Remember there was a river near by.

Fenestrelle, the goal of that day, impressed us instantly as Susa had done, as a place having a soul of kindness and hospitality. About half a mile short of the village Giovanni must needs tread on a loose stone and slightly sprain his ankle. By the time we reached the middle of Fenestrelle it was badly swollen. Once again without any knowledge to guide me I had to choose between two inns—Giovanni was too much occupied with his ankle to exercise the faculty of choice. And once again we fell on our feet. I don't know what the other place was like; I *do* know that

it could not have been better than the Rosa Rossa. It was built round three sides of a little courtyard, while the fourth was occupied by an archway with an iron gate set in a high wall. A balcony ran picturesquely round the first floor, overlooking this courtyard. The roofs and windows, the doors, the rooms, were all upon different levels. It seemed necessary to go up- or down-stairs if you moved a yard. The rooms were not numbered in the usual way, but named after the cities of Italy and earth, from "Milano" to "Londra." I was in "Roma," Giovanni in "Parigi." Later, we had our dinner under a vine in a corner of the courtyard, and my window opened on to a balcony from which I could get a glimpse of the rocky mountain-side rising abruptly from the little town. The music of the river behind the little *albergo* was lullingly incessant.

But it was early yet for dinner, we were both thirsty, and Giovanni's foot needed attention. A bucket of ice-cold water was carried up to "Parigi," and in this Giovanni soaked the sprained ankle for some time. In the meanwhile, being Sunday and late at that, the chemist was absent from his shop, and a lad was sent to hunt him out from the bowling-alley at the back of the village, in order that he might provide a bandage. Presently, greatly comforted, Giovanni limped downstairs after me, and we made our way to a neighbouring *café*. The main street of Fenestrelle is narrow, and throughout the

greater part of its length you can nearly span it with your outstretched arms. To Italians it is a place of purely military interest; there is a huge fort there, and a good many soldiers in their grey-green uniforms add to the gaiety of the place.

We sat down outside the miniature *café,* finding a glass of vermouth and a cigarette heartening and agreeable. Though small, the *café* was an excellent one, exceptionally well-found in the best kind of assorted drinks. No doubt the garrison saw to that. A large mongrel dog came and introduced himself, sitting on an empty chair between us and putting one paw on the table. A little way off were two much-decorated officers and an elderly civilian. Through the door they hurled much chaff of an extremely elementary kind at the landlady. After a little while she disappeared from their view, though not from mine; for from my place I could see her going on tiptoe from the bar to the next room, the window of which was just above the officers' chairs. In her hand she took a siphon. I waited. The officers continued to hurl back-chat toward the empty bar. And then over the scarlet geraniums in the window appeared a sparkling jet, and the gallants were properly soused.

The Rosa Rossa is indeed a comfortable, clean, and delightful wayside inn; the young landlord, in despite of the fact that he knew from the start that there was little to be gained from us, that we were

only stopping there one night, and that we should have to be called at the ungodly hour of four o'clock in the morning, gave us the heartiest welcome. In that welcome the whole household was identified, and a handmaiden who did not expect a tip—for here as elsewhere in Italy the sensible plan of a 10 per cent. *servizio* is in force—called us in the morning, and had hot coffee ready before we left. For what with Giovanni's ankle and my blisters we had determined to take an early bus which runs from Fenestrelle to Perosa. Ankles and blisters permitting, I should like to have covered that stake on foot, the more advantageously to observe the scenery as one passes through the narrow archway and over the double drawbridge of Fenestrelle down from the mountains to the plain. However, they did not permit, and we had to be content with such fleeting glimpses as a closed bus allows in the intervals of holding one's breath and wondering whether the great skill of the driver will successfully dodge sudden and violent death at the next hair-pin bend.

While trying to do full justice to the most important aspects of wayside village inns in Italy, justice is not complete unless some mention is made of the unmentionable. What the Arabs call "the house of politeness" is, as a rule, extraordinarily lacking in exquisiteness in such places. Susa and Oulx I found civilized in that regard, but Fenestrelle and some other remote places, unaccustomed to any but Latin

visitors, were not merely primitive (who minds primitiveness?) but rather dreadful. The beaten track in most parts of Europe is now pretty adequately provided with sanitary arrangements, and the most squeamish have little to fear. But it is the unfrequented byways which are irresistibly attractive to the more adventurous traveller, who has therefore to remember that, whatever their other virtues may be, the Latins in this quite important respect are content with arrangements which as far as we can discover were barely tolerated in Elizabethan England.

We reached Perosa at 6 A.M., and changed immediately on to a steam-tram which runs down to Pinerolo, reaching that considerable town at half-past seven. Here there is a cavalry school, and magnificent horses were to be seen everywhere as officers and their ladies returned from their morning ride.

I should say here that the weather had been serenely perfect from the beginning of my expedition up to the present, and for two or three days to come —cloudless skies, blazing sunshine, clear, cool nights.

Pinerolo is chiefly known in history as a place where the Man with the Iron Mask was imprisoned. In my recollection Pinerolo is, I am afraid, chiefly associated with the most marvellous rolls and butter and huge jorums of coffee. Long had the black coffee of Fenestrelle ceased to comfort us. The lengthy bus-ride had made us ravenously hungry, and at a

café under the arches overlooking the main *piazza* of the town we sat down. Butter is not invariably eaten by Italians with the early morning roll. More often than not they do not eat at all until midday; so that when we asked for butter the girl at the *café* brought out a whole kilo on a big dish, hard and glistening, from which we were to help ourselves at our own discretion. Never, moreover, were rolls more crisp than those, nor coffee more fragrant.

Architecturally, there are several houses in Pinerolo of exceptional interest; one of these in the Via Principi d'Acaja has pointed windows surrounded by decorated brickwork which are extremely beautiful. On the top of the hill at one side of the town the church of S. Maurizio commands a fine and extensive view over the plain of Piemonte. This church, which is of mellow red brick, has a particularly fine tower and spire, and the exterior of the nave reminded me rather of a church at Verona. Inside was every possible abomination, the chief being a modern fresco in the chancel representing windows, with a pot of flowers, and curtains drawn negligently back to reveal them—most lifelike.

CHAPTER VII

FROM PINEROLO TO BORGO SAN DALMAZZO

THE EX-MAYOR OF CUNEO—CATERINA—"SNOBISMO"—ITALIAN SERVANTS—FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY—A SITUATION SAVED.

THE walking-tour, as such, temporarily broke down, and after exploring Pinerolo we tamely got into a train for Cuneo. Now, as the millionaire said of Rome on his return to Monte Carlo, you can 'ave Cuneo. I hated the place. The inn where we spent the night was an old palace, decorated in the Louis XV taste, and I loathe that taste. Cuneo is a large commercial town which was on my route southward, and I had arranged beforehand to call there for letters. Not even the chance of meeting the ex-mayor would drag me there again.

But the ex-mayor is a wonderful chap. Though the city stands on an abrupt plateau, it was flooded once, and a tablet was erected on one of the public buildings to mark the level to which the water rose. Years later the space occupied by this tablet was required for something else, and so the mayor had it raised on

the wall another ten feet—which gave a somewhat exaggerated notion of the great flood.

Then a few years ago the mayors of various places round about and dependent upon Turin were called upon to provide the largest plans obtainable of their respective cities. They were all to meet at the *municipio* at Turin on a certain day with their plans. The Mayor of Cuneo arrived, and the authorities asked him why he had not brought the plan with him.

"But I have," he told them. "You asked for the largest one obtainable. It is outside—on a lorry."

It happens that the words "plan" and "plant," though differentiated by one letter in English, in Italian are identical. And the Mayor of Cuneo had brought with him, roots and all, the largest tree that his district could provide, drawn by twenty-four oxen.

You can eat and drink very comfortably at Cuneo; but, odd as it may seem from some of the foregoing paragraphs, eating and drinking are not wholly sufficient to my enjoyment, and after one night in the Louis XV bedroom I was glad to continue my journey southward. For Giovanni, on the other hand, Cuneo contained all the joys that life has to offer. These consisted of walking from the hotel to the market-place slowly reading the morning paper, of getting into conversation with a stranger in that market-place and talking about politics, of returning

after a little while along the main street, buying another paper, finding another stranger, and talking more politics, of sitting for a while at a *café*, drinking the mild innocuous beer of the country, and of talking to four or five strangers at once about politics. This is not my idea of killing time, and Giovanni, at last reasonably alive to the fact that he could occupy himself on any day of the year in this exhilarating exercise, agreed affably enough to catch a train which brought us to the little town of Borgo San Dalmazzo in time for lunch. Here, at the foot of the mountains, we found under one roof of tangled vine-leaves some of the chief delights that Italy can offer to the wayfarer. The Trattoria d'Italia was a frankly humble place—just a little wine-shop and *café* opposite the railway-station. Behind it ran a swift, narrow stream between flower-clad banks. Here we sat down and ordered wine, and, asking for knives, spread out the luncheon which we had brought with us from Cuneo. (This sort of thing is quite usual in small places, and hurts no landlord's susceptibilities.) The meal consisted of *salami*, Gruyère cheese, onions, and a loaf of rye bread, which looked very good, but which after delicious experience of German *Pumpernickel* was stodgy and disappointing.

But the wine—red wine of mine host's own making, drunk slowly in that chequered shade—was something to make memorable any meal which it ac-

companied. It was of the variety known as Barbera, but this bottle had a vigorous natural sparkle, and had been cooled, not on ice, by heaven! but in very cold water. Never until I go again to Borgo San Dalmazzo shall I drink such wine. Heavy as were our packs, we each ordered a litre bottle to take with us upon the road.

While we were drinking our coffee a young girl came out of the inn with a basket of washing, and began to rinse out the garments in the little stream, singing loudly at her work: "I am poor, but I can wash and iron well," now and then to give emphasis to her poverty, or a loud note, there would be a resounding smack as she beat a dishcloth or a pair of pants against the boarded parapet of the stream. The landlord and his lady wife came out after a time, and complained of the noise, joyous but unmelodious, that had awakened them from their *siesta;* so the child bent to her washing in silence. She was a pretty little girl, twelve years old, with lovely, long curly brown hair in a pig-tail and a most tempting back-view. One little smack and over she would have gone. It was hard to resist, but I resisted. After a time, sick, I suppose, of washing without song, she came and sat down on the bench beside me and played with my walking-stick, and told me—uninvited, I should add—all about herself, and her family, who lived far away in the mountains. Then quite suddenly:

"You have big feet," she observed, "and so have I. I can wear my mistress's shoes."

Giovanni produced a small cake left over from lunch and handed it to her. She said she would keep it for her sister, who was coming to see her on the morrow. After a time she went back to her washing, and, that done, returned to our table, where by that time Giovanni was dozing head on arms and I was trying sleepily to write a letter.

"You are always writing," she said. She then informed me that her name was Caterina, and that she got up at four o'clock every morning. She had beautiful hands and eyes, and with her sackcloth apron and blue print dress was a picturesque little figure, with about as much self-consciousness as a fox-terrier puppy.

"*Arivederla!*" she called out when we left. Altogether an engaging little puss.

Oh, happy land, where children and their elders, humble and gentle, rich and poor, are certain of themselves! Oh, bliss-begotten race that in order to convey a form of abomination which it cannot really understand has to borrow a word from the benighted North and talks about *snobismo!*

You, madam, the so energetic secretary of the Amalgamated Societies of Domestic Employees,[1]

[1] Since writing this, I have discovered that there really is some such society, though its secretary is not a woman. I hope he will go to Borgo San Dalmazzo and help Caterina with the washing.

feel somewhat aggrieved with Caterina. You resent her contentment. You think her a poor thing because she never rebels against her lot, because she rises at 4 A.M. and never gets her day off by "right," but only by the goodwill of her mistress. Still, you know, she gets as many peaches as she can eat, and good wine, and succulent food; and with or without "rights" she has all sorts of privileges and joys which your good members will never, never know. *And* she knows her job, and some day she will have saved up a sufficient *dot,* and she will marry a good-looking young Piemontese farmer, and she will do her own washing in the stream which tumbles over the rocks beside the house, and she will send her children down into the valley into service.

And you, madam, a really kind and reasonable mistress, who have yet been forced to change your cook sixteen times in the last twelve months, and to pay twenty-five shillings each time to a registry office; you, who have allowed this servant problem to harass your nights and to make insufferable your days, you will, very naturally, take train and boat and go to Borgo San Dalmazzo directly you have read this (always supposing you believe me), and you will try and steal Caterina away from her soapsuds and her song.

But you mustn't mind if she tells you that you've got big ears.

Perhaps in this respect I am unduly blessed. I have

known, I still know, ideal servants, both English and Italian. It is not cynicism that makes me say that of course the ideal English servants belong not to the newly arisen generation. And they have this in common with good Italian servants, both old and young, that they have the faculty of establishing themselves as friends of the family, people whose good qualities, competences, and so forth are at the disposal of their masters and mistresses before the world at large. Italian servants not infrequently allow this faculty to develop a stage farther, and reserve even their honesty for their own establishment; that is to say, that some of them will even care for your interests to the disadvantage of the general public. In other words, they have a great gift for loyalty. You are not to expect from them any sort of smarmy subservience; when bidding you a cheery good-night they will frequently omit to call you *signore* or *signora,* and they will certainly expect you to be as interested in their little brothers and sisters and aunts and cousins as they are in yours. Modern education, that bugbear of the harassed housewife whose handmaidens know a little but not quite enough, has left the corresponding handmaiden in Italy unspoiled. She makes glib and apt use of small decorative trifles in a way which I for one find very attractive. A somewhat greedy dog of my acquaintance belonging to a house where I was staying lay

under the kitchen-table replete and lazy. I called to him from the kitchen door, but he only wagged his tail sleepily. "He is a veritable Pantagruel," said the young cook.

A brief anecdote will serve to illustrate the enterprise of the good retainer. A friend of mine was going away for a night; his manservant had come to the station to see him off, and had brought his suitcase containing his evening-clothes. Fortunately, they were early at the station, and my friend had just bought his ticket when his man remembered with a throb of horror that he had omitted to pack the *signor's* trousers. The house was on a hillside a quarter of a mile away as the crow flies, but nearly four times that distance by the only available road, and that was crossed at the bottom of the hill by the railway-line. The servant dashed out of the station, jumped into a carriage, and drove off at a hand-gallop to the house, got the trousers, jumped into the carriage again, set off at a gallop once more, only to find that the level crossing was closed against him for the very train which his master was to catch. What to do? There was a bicycle race that day along that road. Posted near the level crossing was a young man in a very gaudy sweater, himself leaning on a bicycle, in order to warn competitors hurtling round the corner of the lowered gates.

"Quick," says our hero, "I, even I myself, person-

ally, will take your place while you take the *signor's* trousers on your bicycle down the line."

Surely, then, as the train rumbled toward the station it was preceded by the lad racing his bicycle beside the line, triumphantly waving a pair of black trousers.

CHAPTER VIII

FROM BORGO SAN DALMAZZO TO VENTIMIGLIA AND DIANO MARINA

DRINKING-WATER—ANTIQUE FURNITURE—LIMONE —MORE ABOUT PEASANTS—A HAIR-RAISING DRIVE —DOWN THE VALLE DI ROJA—THE SPIDER'S WEB.

ANKLES and blisters being better for a rest, we determined to walk southward from Borgo San Dalmazzo until we came to a good stopping-place, or, alternatively, until we were sick of it. And with this alternation in view we did not allow our route to diverge very considerably from the railway-line. The first place of interest that we came to was Robilante, a bright little place, self-respecting, with little low houses much bedecked with flowers growing from old tomato-sauce tins and other utensils much affected by Italian peasants for this purpose, but not made with that end in view. After so much of that marvellous Barbera, and after walking for some time in a broiling sun, we both suffered from that species of thirst which can only be assuaged by cold water. We asked a passer-by where water was to be obtained.

"There is a fountain there," he said, pointing,

"but it would not be good enough for you. The *signori* will drink wine, and there is an *osteria* higher up the street."

This was said with an air, and addressed, as it was, to a pair of dusty scarecrows the implied compliment was the greater. What was good enough for the people of Robilante, however, was good enough for us, and we accordingly put our heads and hands under the spouting fountain. Prejudice in England is still rife regarding Continental water, so that English people in the most highly civilized hotels buy Evian or Vichy for the purpose of cleaning their teeth. In point of fact, the Italian authorities at all events are as strictly careful in most places as any county council at home. Where a village fountain is fed from a spring, or the water-supply of a town is brought, as it generally is, from the neighbouring hills, you are perfectly safe. Care should be taken, however, with regard to well water. Personally I have (I touch wood) drunk gallons of well water without ill effect, but you need to know about the situation of your well in relation to the houses near it. In Italy, as elsewhere, the quality of the water varies enormously, from flat, hard, or almost brackish stuff, to vital, tasting, live water from an ice-cold spring. And what a drink it is! We may chant of noble beverages, we may write poems to beer or Madeira; we may celebrate claret in panegyrics and close enraptured eyes at the thought of the marvel-

lous old port of which we remember one cradled dusty bottle produced with much ceremony and with suitable anecdote by a proud and perfect host. Very far from me be it to hint the least disloyalty to gallant vintages, be it an exquisite Lafitte, an Yquem, or a Hermitage. Let us by all means sing our ardent harmonies in praise of wine from Imperial Tokay to Australian Burgundy (Buy British goods); but give me an aching thirst, a dusty road, a weary body, and then give me an earthenware pitcher of clear, cold water, and I will drink as the lions drink.

Outside a cottage in this neighbourhood as we went by we saw an old oak chest standing on the cobbles, used as a stall for vegetables. It was in excellent condition, bleached by long exposure to the sun, its panels carved with a simple linen-fold pattern, which roughly suggested the middle of the sixteenth century. If I had been a professional dealer I should no doubt have returned at some later date to that cottage with a car; even as it was I felt strongly tempted to suggest to the greengrocer that a proper stall, such as I would gladly provide, would suit his purpose a great deal better than the chest. There was a time when I could not possibly have resisted some inquiry at all events as to the possibility of acquiring his chest for myself. But that time has passed, and Alfredo or Mario or whatever his name may be may keep his chest for the next ardent collector who happens to pass that way. So

rich has Italy been and is still in the finer, more glorious objects of art, be they pictures or salt-cellars by Cellini, or chimney-pieces of della Robbia, that up to the present the more homely antiques of the country have been for the most part untouched. Magnificent things are faked in Italy, and, indeed, Italy led the way in the deft art of forging antiques from the days of Michelangelo onward. There remains, however, a vast stretch of unexploited territory, as you might say, on to which the reader, if he is lucky, may stray inadvertently. In the meantime he may be perfectly sure that I will tell him nothing that can help him; it is always conceivable that I might start collecting old stuff again.

At Vernante, where we arrived about five o'clock, the country is wild, and the little village had, I thought, a slightly menacing air, which made me feel uncomfortable. Nor did the warning of the *padrona* at a wine-shop against proceeding southward by road reassure us. She was vague, but—that road was excessively lonely. And there was that in her manner and expression which suggested all kinds of horror. Our footsteps were dogged, moreover, by the village idiot, who trotted after us wherever we went and begged alms. Neither Giovanni nor I were really disturbed by peasant superstition, but we had formed a resolution to reach the little town of Limone before nightfall, and Giovanni's ankle was still rather troublesome, my blister not quite healed.

We caught a train at six o'clock. The journey is not a long one, but the railway-line loops the loop in the bowels of a mountain, so that in more than one place on emerging from a tunnel you may look straight down the side of a precipice to the line you have just traversed. It is, in fact, St. Gothard in miniature, and leads to the reflection that the Italians need to be, and are, the finest railway engineers in the world.

We stayed for two nights at the Hôtel Posta at Limone, an inexpensive establishment of almost luxurious comfort. There is, for example, a modern bathroom in which for the first time since I had left England I was able to lie down all at once under hot water. At Susa I had a hip-bath, at other places we could keep clean, as I have said, by washing in instalments, a bit at a time. But it is not so much actual cleanliness (though I admit it is in itself a good thing) that seems to matter most, but, in any climate especially a hot one, it is the fact of being totally immersed at least once a day in water which is, particularly to the English and Americans, a modern luxury that has swiftly passed into a necessity. How swiftly, still living memory can inform you.

Signor Benedusi, the proprietor of the hotel, thoroughly understands the outlandish requirements of people who have crossed either the Atlantic or the English Channel. He has, too, a wonderful cook, and I cannot think of any place where I have tasted Italian food to better advantage, with one exception

which I will come to in due course. There is excellent trout-fishing in this neighbourhood, and, indeed, Limone may be warmly recommended as a centre for rock-climbing and for anglers, equally with people who are on the look-out for a quiet place to rest in. In every direction a short walk takes you into wild and lonely country. The place stands just over 1000 metres, and in the summer has therefore the most perfect climate imaginable. Being perched high in a cup of the mountains, it does, of course, rain there more often than on the plains or by the sea, but not often enough to be depressing. It rained very heavily on our second morning there, so that instead of setting out on foot as we had planned we took the motor which starts from Cuneo and passes through Limone on its way over the frontier to Nice. The evening before we had decided to take our food with us in order to avoid being tied to the neighbourhood of an inn when we were hungry. Giovanni, who has an admirable knack of getting the best out of people, visited an old lady who kept a small shop, in a narrow byway, where a great variety of eatables were to be procured. One descended half a dozen steps from the steep, cobbled alley into a cool, cellar-like room, where onions and sausages hung from the roof and a variety of cheeses, butter, and other *commestibili* were set out neatly on shelves. We thought some anchovies, of which the old lady had a

fresh barrel, and hard-boiled eggs would ring the changes rather agreeably on the usual *salami.*

"At what time are you leaving in the morning?" the old girl asked.

"At eight o'clock," we told her.

Very good, she would have the anchovies boned and scraped, the eggs boiled, and, no, it would be no trouble at all to get the bread from the baker and to make up a parcel of all that we wanted. It would be ready by half-past seven in the morning. It was ready, and I observed that she had made no charge, as she was entitled to do, for the slight trouble of boiling the eggs, and the considerable nuisance of preparing the anchovies. Indeed, she had bought a large loaf from the baker far too much for us, had cut it into two and kept half for herself, charging us for our half only. I apologize for this record of half-penny transactions, but they are not without their interest. In England, and I speak of remote country districts, it is twenty-five years since anyone of what is called a humble station of life definitely refused to allow me to pay for some trifling refreshment. I don't refer, of course, to regular innkeepers, who are often ready enough to stand you a drink, but to chance wayfaring to cottage or to farm. The complete absence of avarice among most of the Italian peasants that I have known in wild places is conspicuously charming.

The bus conveys you over the Col di Tenda down to the town of that name, which lies, or rather hangs, upon the mountain-side some miles below the top of the pass. The actual summit above Limone is evaded by means of a straight tunnel cut through the rock three kilometres in length, lit by electricity, and closed at either end when necessary by huge iron gates. The slopes upon the Limone side are comparatively gentle, but upon emerging from the southern mouth of the tunnel you find yourself on the top of a gorge negotiated by series after series of hair-pin turns, so short that you wonder alarmedly whether so big a vehicle as an omnibus can accomplish the trip. Many stretches of the road are artificial, and rest on huge banks of stone, but the drivers are men of callous nerves and practised skill. To see them swing the big buses round these appalling corners, with hideous drops below them, fills you with admiration even while it raises your hair. On the day in question it was, as I have said, raining, and more than once the wheels skidded sickeningly in terrifying places. However, we came to the end of the steepest part safely, and in due course proceeded along a reasonably secure road. The Valle di Roja, as this gorge is called, extends for about forty miles from the top down to Ventimiglia. Throughout its length it is extraordinarily beautiful. The road winds at a varying and sometimes considerable height above the steeply rushing torrent. Rugged cliffs,

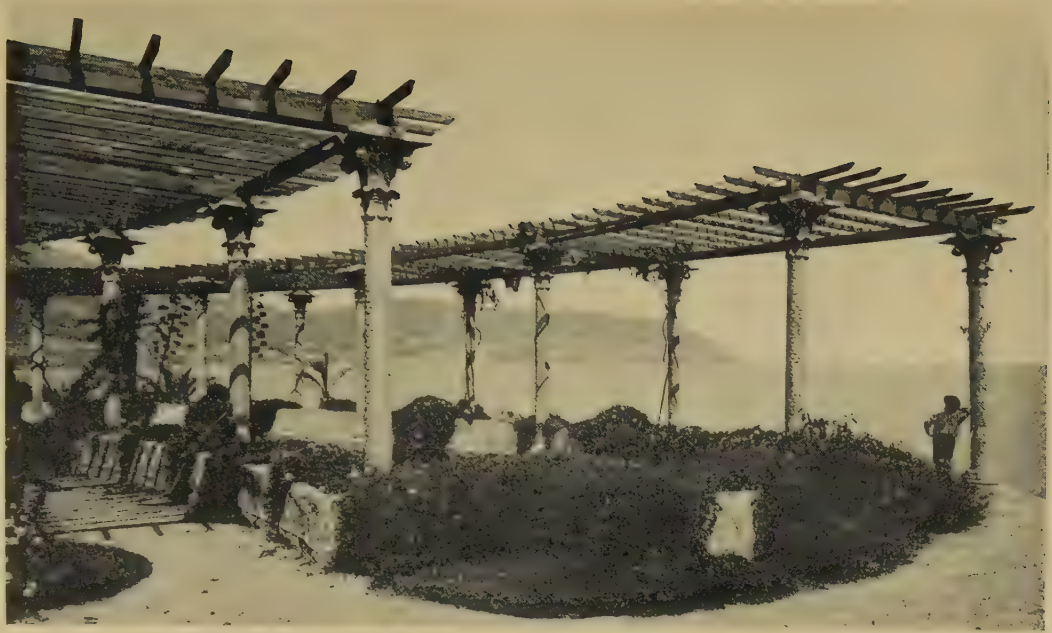

Photo E. N. I. T., London

BORDIGHERA: LA CISTERNA

Photo Brogi

VENTIMIGLIA

sheer upon either hand, sometimes overhang the road, occasionally seeming almost to meet overhead. To make a homely comparison for those who know the little ravine in question, the Valle di Roja made me think of Lydford Gorge in Devonshire, as seen by a small insect. The formation of narrow water-worn gullies is the same; only the proportions in the Italian valley are multiplied just about a hundred times.

Tenda is a picturesque place of great charm. It is a town of narrow wynds and alleyways and cobbled paths and tall houses rising tier upon tier. The *duomo* has a finely carved door with the twelve Apostles in stone over it. Here and there the entries to what are now quite poor houses are decorated with finely carved slates and black marble slabs, seeming to suggest a glory that has departed, but has left a few keepsakes behind.

On our arrival at Tenda we followed our usual procedure when there was any exploring to be done, and we could avoid carying our rucksacks. We went into a small *cantina* for a small drink, and left our packs in the willing hands of the proprietor. In the course of this tour, and both before it and since, I did this a score or more of times, and never on any one occasion did I find my trust abused. I do think, perhaps, that disreputable clothes and dusty shoes are a surer passport among simple people than well-creased trousers and an expensive car (judging

from the experiences of travellers *de luxe)*, but personally I have no doubt in my mind of which I think necessary to give Italian peasants the benefit. At midday we came to the *cantina* to eat the food we had brought, and to share with the landlord and a friend the bottles of Barbera we had carried from Borgo San Dalmazzo. The rain had stopped before we reached Tenda, and everything was a-sparkle in brilliant sunshine again. We set off after lunch on the downward road to San Dalmazzo di Tenda, which is a somewhat sophisticated and well-brushed little place, with expensive hotels and garages, much frequented by well-to-do Italians from Ventimiglia and elsewhere. This neighbourhood is again extraordinarily prolific of wild flowers, and in some places near Tenda peonies are a weed. As we wanted to reach Ventimiglia before nightfall we succumbed to the convenience of the motor-bus again. This bus plies between San Dalmazzo di Tenda and the frontier town. Just below the former place the road passed through an obtruding corner of French territory, and an armed *gendarme* rides in the car until the frontier is again crossed; the reason being, I suppose, that a passenger might take it into his head to slip away down the road which leads eventually to Nice. The same procedure is observed with a private car, the French *gendarme* rides on the step if there is no room for him inside, and taking ostentatious care that his revolver is conveniently to hand.

After many miles the stupendous crags upon either side of the Valle di Roja spread farther apart, the river widens, there are vineyards upon either side, and remote white villages are seen upon the high lips of the valley; and before the sun goes down the now level road turns a corner of a low hill, and you see Ventimiglia before you: on one side of the wide bridge the hotels, the station, the commercial quarter; on the other the old town with high ramparts and towers, and steeply climbing cobbled lanes.

I call Ventimiglia a frontier town because you go through the customs there coming from or returning to France. Actually, however, it is about as far within the Italian border as Modane is within the French; and the dividing line near the sea occurs at the village of Grimaldi, a mile or two beyond the famous and exquisite gardens of La Mortola.

From the high ramparts of the old town of Ventimiglia you get a wonderfully fine view westward to the bold headland above Monte Carlo and beyond; and the old part of the town is well worth a visit on its own account. But Ventimiglia is hateful in the memory of most people who have occasion to use that route from France to Italy, or *vice versa*. The business of getting through the customs is ill-managed and usually protracted; and, except in summer, the two station-clocks with their hour's difference in time drive you mad in trying to reckon which clock is right for your particular train. Fortunately for us

we were already in Italian territory; there were only the rucksacks to think of, there was no need to go near that wretched station, and time was of no imminent consequence whatever. We had hoped to be met by a friend with a car, but he was unable to come, and so we had to spend the night in Ventimiglia. This was worth doing, if only because it gives me an opportunity and a reasoned excuse for telling other people not to do so if they can help it. As often happens at frontier towns, the hotel-keepers are moderately rapacious, and the Ventimiglia hotels have a bad reputation among Italians at all events for their unpaying guests. The place where we stayed was, however, quite clean, though there was an atmosphere in the town which suggested that visitors were but flies to be drawn, rather casually, into the spider's web.

The following morning we took the train to Diano Marina—the intervening resorts of Bordighera and San Remo being quite outside the purpose of our tour. These, together with other towns between Ventimiglia and Diano Marina, will be found fully dealt with in the Appendix.

CHAPTER IX

FROM OULX TO MODANE

THE RETURN JOURNEY—LEVEL CROSSINGS—HARD GOING—OVER THE COL DI RHO—WONDERFUL VIEWS —"ALL OUT."

In order to be done with the Maritime Alps, I propose now to skip four or five weeks, and to return to the Albergo Commerciale at Oulx, to which we came by train from Genoa, and whence we started out to complete our holiday on foot. This time we determined to reach Modane by way of Bardonecchia and the Col di Rho, instead of by Susa and Mont Cenis. The latter route, over which I had walked, Giovanni had motored on two or three occasions, but I don't think I see any kind of motor short of a tank going over the Col di Rho.

The first part of the walk, as far as Bardonecchia, calls for little mention. The road runs along the bottom of the valley, crossing and recrossing the railway, and beside the river. It is a good road, and thus far can be recommended for cars, but the motorist is prone to discover in himself great reserves of impatience when using a road in close proximity to a railway. If the road is of any importance there are gates at every level crossing, or rather, iron poles which are let down on either side

of the line to form a barrier whenever a train leaves the preceding station on either side. These are worked from a station. The trouble arises here that at some level crossings there is no telephone. Here weighted swing-bars are opened and shut by the man on the spot, according to the printed time-table. As Italian trains, though better than they used to be, are not invariably up to schedule, the motorist is liable to be kept waiting at such crossings as I have described for a considerable time. Occasionally it happens, too, that the gentleman at the neighbouring station responsible for raising the gates forgets to do so. At all events, remote level crossings on a much-frequented road like the Cornice, sometimes—say, on a Sunday—have a regular queue of cars, horse-drawn carriages, and ancient shandrydans for some distance up the way on either side. It has happened, too, that the level-crossing keeper, having kept a single cart or car waiting for twenty minutes, suddenly relents and, forgetting that every minute passed increases the probability of the train's near approach, will open the gates to let the vehicle through. This, when the level crossing is close to the mouth of a tunnel, as it often happens to be, is obviously dangerous. And from this cause or from the opposite form of forgetfulness on the part of the man at the station, and apart from places where there are no gates at all, there have been deplorable and ghastly accidents.

To return to the road from Oulx to Bardonecchia, on either side the mountains are well wooded, and their lower slopes were, in the latter half of July, golden with abundant crops. At Beaulard we found a pleasantly cool inn with a sanded floor, where simple and excellent fool is obtainable, and a really good red wine, which the landlord has sent up to him from his birthplace in Piemonte. On our arrival the landlord was playing with his baby, his wife being out; and when we sat down he turned to a peasant customer who was drinking his wine near-by, and, holding out the baby, said:

"Take that while I serve these gentlemen."

Before reaching Beaulard we had passed through the village of Savoulx, where there is an old church remarkable for its north door. This is panelled with a linen-fold design, and has a finely carved coat of arms. The date above the elaborate lock-plate and bolt is 1543.

Bardonecchia is a prosperous little town, situated at the Italian end of the Mont Cenis tunnel, and is therefore the first station after Modane. Signor Giolitti has a house there, which he visits in the summer, and a small street is named after him. In the winter many people visit the place for skiing. There are several *alberghi,* of which I found the Alpi modest, inexpensive, and comfortable.

Half a mile or more up the road from the station you come to the old village of Bardonecchia, which

has a fine church with really magnificent, carved choir-stalls, in which nobody—as far as I could discover—took any interest. Near here on the following morning Giovanni and I bought some food—slices of *salami,* cheese, some large onions, and bread—and at eleven o'clock set out for the long march to Modane. A young man playing bowls at the back of the *albergo* on the previous evening had positively assured us that we could cover the ground comfortably in four hours. Well, I very much hope that since then he has done it himself. I have never been able to discover what the exact distance along the mule-track we took is, but I should put it in the neighbourhood of twenty miles, during which one rises about 4000 feet to the top of the pass. Speaking for myself, my rucksack contained all that I had started with from Modane, together with a few oddments which I had acquired during the expedition. Not to make a song about it, we reached Modane when the clocks were striking nine.

During the middle of the day the heat, judged by English standards, was considerable, but after a month on the Riviera not a matter demanding any kind of sympathy. It was, in fact, pleasantly hot, and the breeze was delicious. The mule-track is, however, of the roughest possible description, and the average gradient is impressive. Over a great deal of the upward track the pathway was of loose stones, so that you seemed to slip back six inches for

every foot you advanced. My rucksack, too, grew no lighter as time went on, for (to be literal) I had put our food into my pockets. Giovanni had less weight to carry, and in any case, though lazy enough on occasion, can when he chooses perform athletic prodigies without turning a hair. We reached the wooden cross at the Col at about 5.30 P. M., having some time before found edelweiss. We had taken our time, and the ever-changing wonders of the view provided as good an excuse for many and long rests as the physical need for them. I had not supposed that so many big mountains existed out of Switzerland. Rank upon rank they appeared as we rose higher, of every grotesque shape, with beetling precipices and overhanging crags, towering into the clear sky of a perfect afternoon. Far away rose Monte Viso, a sharp needle-point, which, however, looked so near that it seemed as though you could jump the distance. From one side of our path vast screes stretched up fan-wise, with the narrow end above to the foot of sheer and shadowed cliffs. Huge boulders had lodged here and there in the screes, and I wondered why they had so lodged, and why they did not come tumbling down on us. At one unpleasant point the track crossed a narrow scree, where to slip would have been inadvisable. Toward the top of the pass there were big patches of snow lying about everywhere, their melting edges looking curiously dirty where no dirt had ever been.

From the Col downward, until at last we reached a road, we found the track even worse than that we had mounted. There was nothing to tell us when we had entered France, and though, from a large-scale map, I have seen since then that the boundary runs along the crest of the mountains, there was no *douane* that we could see, or sentry-box, or notice-board, as there is on Mont Cenis. From the time of leaving a tiny village of wooden huts just above Bardonecchia, where we had stopped for our lunch, until far below the Col on the French side, when we ran into an encampment of Chasseurs Alpines, we did not see a living soul. For loneliness, for majestic splendour of scene, I have never known anything like that walk.

Having reached in the twilight a point on the road whence we could look down on to the station at Modane, we began to look about for a short cut. There were one or two precipitous tracks through the pine-woods, but we mistrusted them, and having no wish to spend the night unfed, in the open, we followed the road. I should say that a couple of miles on the French side of the Col di Rho we had devoured a morsel of bread and cheese and onion which we had kept over from lunch. We needed it. But by now we were again ravenously hungry, thirsty, and dog-tired. To our great disgust we found that the road led only to the higher part of the town, a couple of miles from the station, and

I had determined to finish the day's march within a short stone's throw of to-morrow's train. So we had to take to ploughed fields, and to make a precarious way, now in pitch darkness, over a multitude of railway-sidings, before emerging into the street.

Then began a limping search for a place to feed in. That part of Modane is full of restaurants and small hotels, but that night was a *festa,* and almost everybody seemed to be eaten out of hearth and home. At long last we, who had so often fallen upon our feet, dragged them into the bar of a little hotel kept by an Italian. We addressed him in his own tongue; we had come from Italy, we wished we hadn't, but I for one must perforce return to England. Could he find us a little dinner? Could he not! Immediately, immediately. But first of all the *signori* stood in urgent need of a little something, and two glasses of vermouth, gingered up with some form of bitters, were promptly handed to us. The rest of that evening is a vaguely delicious memory. I seem to see myself sitting at one end of a long table with Giovanni on my right, greedily devouring my last plateful of *minestrone* for many a long day. I seem to recall "bifstek" and a dish of vegetables. Then we were led away up many stairs to comfortable rooms. Twelve hours must elapse before I caught the Paris train on the morrow, ten of them passed in dreamless sleep, into which I immediately plunged.

CHAPTER X

AROUND DIANO MARINA

BATHING—THE STORY OF SIGNOR A.—A WORD ON SUITABLE CLOTHES—THE VILLAGES BEHIND DIANO —THE ASCENT OF MONT 'EVIGNO—A NARROW ESCAPE.

We return now to the strict chronological order of our procedure eastward along the Ligurian coast.

For many years now San Remo, and secondly Bordighera, have been well known to the English and Americans alike. In both of these places there is a considerable permanent colony of foreign residents, now augmented by a sprinkling of Russian refugees. As previously indicated, we "skipped" these two towns on this particular trip, and headed straight for Diano Marina, which for some days we used as a centre from which to explore the surrounding neighbourhood. Since then I have come to know Diano Marina very intimately, and, though there is nothing in the district exactly spectacular or sensationally beautiful, the little town can be very warmly recommended, specially in the spring and summer, to visitors in search of peace, with an opportunity of enjoying Continental life in inexpen-

sive comfort. The place is "civilised," but so far unspoiled. The Hôtel du Parc can heartily be recommended for comfort and good cooking. It is an old private house, with large rooms, facing the sea; and the needs of English and American visitors are fully understood.

The chiefest joy anywhere on the Mediterranean coast in summer is the bathing, a joy rather too populously shared by the world at large during the months of July and August, and at the larger resorts, for the taste of quiet people. But at Diano and elsewhere, both on what are called the Western and Eastern Rivieras (which are divided by the seaport of Genoa), a little trouble or a short walk will readily discover some hidden cove where one can bathe alone or with one's own party. Italian holiday-makers, on the other hand, thoroughly enjoy a crowd, and during the season the Mediterranean littoral that I am acquainted with, from Ventimiglia to Spezia, finds a ready analogy in Hampstead Heath on the first Monday in August. But Italians are not, as a rule, early bathers, and even in the height of the season at Diano I have often found the foreshore entirely deserted at eight o'clock in the morning.

And what bathing! You have walked, we will say, far enough to be pleasantly warm, to feel that sudden immersion in water of any kind will be a rich pleasure, you scramble over the rocks to the cove of

your choice, or alternatively, if you are past the years of scrambling, you sit down on the nearest available stretch of lonely beach. Until your feet have become hardened you can hardly bear to put them unshod upon the rocks at noon. You wade or dive in according to circumstances and inclination, and find yourself wrapt in sheer refreshment. The sea is cool only by comparison with the grilling heat on shore. After swimming out a little way and returning to the shallows you have the exact sensation associated with a warm bath. The clinging discomfort of some sort of bathing-dress is necessary, except, of course, as elsewhere, in places where there is no chance of being seen; and for women the costume must not be of too frolicsome a description; if it is the wearer is subject to a fine. Without any desire to enter the lists of controversy in this matter, I would say that its true perspective is beginning to be appreciated at large. The following anecdote, for the truth of which I can vouch, excellently illustrates the real point at issue. An American gentleman had a villa, not by the sea as it happens, in Italy in which were housed a very fine collection of treasures. During a prolonged absence he desired to let the villa, but naturally sought a tenant who could be thoroughly trusted to guard these treasures; and through the medium of an agent exactly the right tenant was found—a man of letters, a connoisseur who would at once thoroughly appreciate both his

privileges and his duty. The arrangement was made, and the American went away. Six months later or so he returned, and before going out to his villa visited the agent. Yes, he was assured, all was well. The villa and its precious contents were perfectly safe; everything had been well looked after. "But," said the agent, "there is one matter upon which you ought to speak to Signor A. Count B. has been complaining lately, since his daughters are home from school, that Signor A. will walk about his terrace without any clothes on, with a dish of peaches in one hand and a pipe in the other. I haven't liked to——"

The landlord drove out to his villa and called upon Signor A. He found, indeed, what was nearest to his own heart, that his possessions had been duly cared for, and that all in the house was, materially, well. Signor A., dressed in pyjamas, received him with great affability, so that for some time the landlord found he had but little heart for the matter about which the agent had felt it necessary that he should speak. Before his departure, however, he summoned up courage and said:

"Oh—er—there is just one little matter about which I feel—er—you understand, I am not speaking for myself—I must say something. Count B.'s windows overlook this terrace, and his daughters are now at home on their holiday. It appears that he has been complaining—you understand, my dear fellow, that *I* don't mind at all what you do—has been

complaining, in short, that you walk about in the daytime on the terrace without any clothes on."

"What!" exclaimed Signor A., suddenly furious. "What! complained did he? *Complained!*" With a rapid gesture he tore open his pyjamas. "But am I not beautiful?"

That, then, is the real test. And when, as in the past, at the Lido and elsewhere, it has been possible to sit at a *café* at the next table to a man of twenty stone or so, with enormous pink rolls of fat, pendulous and wobbling, clad (if you can call it) in a diminutive pair of striped drawers, I do feel that any enactment which proscribes this sort of thing, even at the expense of naked beauty, should be upheld.

Italians generally divide their summer holiday between the mountains and the sea, and for the fortnight or so that they usually spend on the coast they go in for a regular sun-cure. From ten or eleven in the morning until sundown they live on the beach, with an interval for lunch and occasional drinks at a *café*. Over their bathing dresses the men wear a suit of blazingly gorgeous pyjamas made of the material which we associate with bath-towels. They occupy the day in and out of the water, with long intervals lying prone and sometimes asleep in the full glare of the sun, alternately on their backs and on their faces. Sometimes, with a view to curing rheumatism they sit for hours buried in hot sand.

(Of my own personal experience of this treatment I shall tell in its place.) In the course of a few days this exposure peels the skin off back and chest, so that it is usual, especially in the case of men and boys, to see them wandering about with enormous raw patches. Another few days serves to heal these, and before the holiday is over you see the beach crowded with people who are tanned to the colour of an old saddle. Needless to say, this cure has extraordinarily beneficial results, and the pity is that opportunities are so few to make the exposure to the sun complete.

While on the subject of nudity it is worth mention that the ordinary apparel on the Ligurian coast in summer should be of the flimsiest description. In winter the clothes suitable for that part of the Riviera are on an average not greatly different from those we wear at home. If you are a "cold" person you will be glad of warm underclothes and ordinary tweeds. You certainly require an overcoat after sundown, and not infrequently before it. But the blessed comfort of hot summer! If you do not feel called upon to be especially "respectable" a thin shirt and a pair of linen trousers is the ideal dress for a man, while women wear a cool equivalent, the exact nature of which my modesty (or whatever it is) leaves to their imagination. Few people wear socks or stockings during the day, and canvas shoes or sandals are all that your feet require. In the evening

it is advisable to cover your ankles, which seem to be especially delectable to mosquitoes.

From time to time one is amused at seeing some foreign visitor in the regulation tropical outfit—which is suitable enough—but with the addition of a *sola topee,* which is absurd. Any light hat, straw or panama preferred, protects the flimsiest skull from the Italian sun, though personally I've never found it strictly necessary to wear anything on my head at all; and I know several people, both English and Italians, who go bareheaded throughout the summer.

I said above that a certain exiguous costume was all that was necessary unless you felt called upon to be "respectable." It is worth mentioning that eminently "respectable" English people, especially men who would never dream of appearing impolitely dressed when staying at an hotel at home, as soon as they go abroad feel that this special branch of their code of manners may be relaxed to almost indefinite limits; so that you see ordinary civilized members of society lounging about first-class hotels looking very much as though they were going to referee a football match. Heaven defend me from classifying people according to the clothes they wear, from discussing good or bad "form," correctness or incorrectness; but it should be remembered that some little recognition is due to the dignity and *amour-propre* of a foreign hotel, and that though conventions are meticulously observed by the worst offen-

ders in their own country, "Any old thing will do. Nobody knows me. So what can it matter?" forms a too easy excuse for sheer slackness abroad. Moreover, this same slackness lies at the root of much ill-feeling and unpleasantness between English people and their foreign hosts.

To wander from village inn to inn in your oldest clothes in the progress of a walking-tour is one thing; and the village inn will, as I have told you, welcome you with open arms. But when you arrive in Rome (or its equivalent for the purpose of this moral) it is only decent to do as Rome does, and to put on your best bib and tucker.

At Diano Marina, though the bathing is excellent, the principal attraction of the place lies in the many delightful walks that may be taken from it. The hills which shut in the little bay are garlanded with villages, like blooms that hang from over a garden wall. Gorlera, Serreto, Calderino, Castello, in the west and north, and scattered hamlets which sparkle from the green hillsides in the sunshine, terminating with Cervo on the eastern promontory, are a constant delight to the eye. All the villages named, with the exception of Cervo, have the name Diano prefixed to them properly, though in ordinary conversation it is not used, while Diano signifies the main town by the sea. Diano Castello is, however, the old and original place, and you will see it marked on old atlases where no mention is made of the town

by the sea. Diano Marina itself, such as it was then, was totally destroyed by an earthquake in the late eighties. The name arises from the story that Diana hunted the stag all over these hills and vales, finally slaying it at Cervo, which mean "a stag." The views to be obtained from Calderino and Castello are very well worth the couple of miles that in each case you walk to get them; but that from the top of Capo Berta, the western limit of the bay, is impressively beautiful, including as it does a wide sweep of the coast, and range after range of mountains to the north. All the hillsides hereabouts are clothed with olives, while on the high shoulder of Capo Berta there is a fragrant wood of pine-trees, which give a grateful shade to people who have walked up the steep but never arduous track from the seashore. Round about Castello, which stands high on a knoll by itself, there are the remains of the old wall which once guarded it from invasion by the Saracens, or, for that matter, from more local enemies. It was here one day that I found a door, leading from a common entrance-hall to one of two peasants' houses, which was really a magnificent example of linen-fold panelling. This was of oak, the door opposite being more simply panelled and of walnut-wood. From Diano, looking north and east, Castello and Cervo with their pinks and whites and warm, glowing yellows are ever delightful. The houses in the distance are like a pile of child's bricks thrown down

haphazard below, but tumblingly piled on each other toward the apex.

An obvious point of attack from Diano is Mont Evigno, the highest hill in the range which closes the principal valley to the north. And dawn being what we particularly wanted to see from there, we set out one moonlit night at about eleven o'clock, with a couple of borrowed sweaters and a little food in an otherwise empty rucksack. Giovanni was certain that he knew the way, indeed, that the way could not possibly be missed, that blindfolded you could not lose it; though to be pedantic he had never actually covered the whole ground before. The next time Giovanni says that I will take the precaution of studying a large-scale map, though that too, as I have found before now to my cost, may be, like Giovanni's intuition, somewhat misleading. We reckoned that we should do the distance without hurrying ourselves in four hours, thus reaching the summit some time before dawn. In the event, dawn was actually breaking before we reached the point from which the best view was to be obtained. To know the names of the villages through which you must pass in order to reach a particular place is one thing; but in the dead of night, when every one except the dogs is asleep, it is not always so easy as it looks on the map to know which village is which. When we had left Castello behind we made for Arentino, but whether we ever got there or not I have never known to this

day; we passed through a village set among olive-woods, which may easily have been the one aimed for, but I rather think it was not. At all events, after we had passed it, and after a road of sorts had given place to a rough mule-track, we had to own ourselves completely lost. The moonlight was sufficient to give us an idea of our general direction, for by it we could see the dim outline of the hills to the west. Evigno itself was now hidden by the rising ground before us. Now and again we sat down and smoked a pipe. Once we camped in an angle formed by rocks on a somewhat draughty hillside and had a meal. On this high ground the nights are undeniably cold, and while resting we were glad of the sweaters.

It was eerie going in that wild country, for houses were few and far between, and unless they were clustered in some little hamlet they were not to be seen in that light. Once on a hilltop I caught sight of a long-abandoned ruin, recognizable by the moonlight which streamed through an empty window-space. Since leaving Castello we had not seen or heard a living soul. We might easily have been explorers setting foot for the first time on completely unknown territory. That is the fascination of such an expedition. There is in it a genuine romance quite unalloyed by the fact that but a few miles away lie all the amenities of sophisticated modern life. After

a considerable time (but neither of us had brought a watch), dawn or no dawn, I determined to rest. There are many things that one can learn to do without in life, but for me sleep is not one of them. The long grass at the side of the path, invitingly soft and comfortable in the daytime, was now drenched with dew, and rather than invite the certainty of a bad chill—perhaps more readily acquired in that climate than is always appreciated—I lay down on the stony pathway and dozed. Giovanni sat near by and smoked his pipe with an air which I suspect to have been fraught with resignation. After an hour or so he suggested that it was time for us to move on; and, indeed, the first hint of pallor was beginning to creep up the eastern sky.

And then occurred one of those remarkable surprises which always fill me, who am lazy, with a quite undeserved joy. Certainly we had missed our way—our shortest way, that is; but we were nevertheless within but a few minutes of our journey's end. A brisk walk up the ever-steepening track—and one wanted to be brisk for the sake of warmth until the sun rose—led us presently on to the close-cropped turf just below the summit of the hill. Hence, as the sun rose, grey cliffs scarred with violet shadows rose in the north above the nearer, greener ranges, while just below the thinnest haze was melted from above the hanging woods. We stayed up there

for an hour or more, delighting in the magnificent prospects to north and south, delighting perhaps most of all in the rapidly increasing warmth as a crimson east gradually faded out to full daylight.

We never, as it happened, went up to the precise and actual top of the hill, and it is just as well for us that we did not do so. Some one—I believe his identity was never discovered—had chosen that spot at some time during the night or previous afternoon to shoot himself, having first shot his dog. The wretched shepherd who must have discovered the body (as I heard afterward) only a few minutes after we began the descent (and indeed we saw the lonely figure climbing the last grassy slope as we plunged downhill) tramped several miles in order to report the fact to the police, and was forthwith made to return with them to point out the exact place of the tragedy.

"It was a good job you were lazy for once," Giovanni observed. "Pretty smart of you."

In order to vary the journey and to see new places we did not return by the way we had come, but descended Evigno on its northern side, and then, turning east, reached in a couple of hours or so the village of Stellanello, which stands at the head of the next valley.

In a steep subsidiary gorge on the right of our descent we noticed an abrupt rock, where in days long past had evidently stood a castle or fortification

of some importance. Much of it was entirely ruined, but cottages of a tumbledown description were lodged like birds' nests among the crumbling red brick ruins. The exploration of that rock is a pleasure in prospect.

CHAPTER XI

AROUND DIANO MARINA—*continued*

COFFEE AT STELLANELLO—THE VILLAGE THAT CANNOT BE FOUND—ONEGLIA AND PORTO MAURIZIO—TO PIEVE DI TECO—PEASANT HOSPITALITY.

At Stellanello we found just such another primitive village inn as had been the mainstay and delight of our tour. Here, on a rough but spotless cloth, we were presently face to face with enormous bowls of especially rich and fragrant coffee. We drew attention to this fragrance, and asked the peasant-woman who served us what coffee it was; and she told us exactly what proportion of Guatemala there was to Porto Rico. It was very characteristic of the country that a peasant-woman in a valley far more remote than any Yorkshire dale should take enough interest in this quite important subject to be able to answer a question, which, if asked of the head-waiter of a big London hotel, would elicit smiling ignorance and an offer to inquire.

A one-horse bus of a sort would be leaving Stellanello at about one o'clock, and so, having ordered lunch for noon, we went out to the grassy hillside at

the back of the inn, where in the shade of a pear-tree we lay down and slept. After our meal we boarded an extraordinary vehicle which was to proceed down the valley to the station of Andora. It was a kind of low wagonette, but with two seats in front at right angles to the main part; it had a wooden roof, and sun and air could be held in check by canvas curtains. I won't say that one of the front wheels was much larger than the other, but it looked as though it were, and certainly various parts of the equipage, important to safety, were tied up with odd pieces of string. The horse, a purplish roan, somewhat belied the proverb on which I was brought up on at home, that all roans are good; he was a little old, poor old chap, a little gone in the wind, and a little sorry in the eye. He had one trace of leather, and one of that strong but hairy cord with which large parcels of merchandise are often tied up. In despite of pretty severe jolting along a road the first two or three miles of which were phenomenally bad, I went to sleep at intervals, and have but the vaguest idea of how long the journey took. The distance is, however, about twelve kilometres, and the time taken to cover it, with frequent stoppages to drop or pick up passengers, or for the driver to have a drink or to pass the time of day with a friend, may roughly be computed when the state of the roads, the horse, the carriage and a full complement of passengers, eight in number toward the end, are taken into account.

Two or three miles from the station we came to the old village of Andora. There is a local saying that you may look for ever in vain for this place, never finding it. There is a certain wild exaggeration about this, for I distinctly remember, when for some weeks the previous year I was staying near there, drinking wine at a *café* in order to restore my strength after sending a telegram. Of the lady at the post-office I had inquired whether it was necessary to add "Inghilterra" to "London." She looked at her book of directions, which was in French, and asked whether that was Grande Allemagne.

"No," I replied, "I thought we'd had a war to decide it wasn't." But she took some convincing.

So Andora proper does exist, and, though inconspicuous, can be found.

Then there is Andora Castello, which consists of a few cottages built round and about a ruined castle on a small hill, and which will be described in detail later; and there is what ought to be called Andora Marina, but isn't, which straggles eastward from the station for a mile or more. From that station then we took the train back to Diano, passing but one other, Cervo, on the way.

The next station to Diano on the western side is Oneglia, a market and manufacturing town of some consequence. There are good shops there, a prison of some importance, a garrison, and a considerable harbour. The chief industry of the place is a great steel-

rolling works, a branch of the head foundry at Voltri, near Genoa. Beyond Oneglia and joining it is the more ancient Porto Maurizio and the two places together are now called Imperia (from the river Impero), which has recently become the name of a province for postal purposes. Porto Maurizio is of great architectural interest, and is picturesquely built upon a steep knoll, which arises abruptly from the sea, and upon its flanks. Not far from the summit of this knoll, where courts and alleys are extraordinarily congested, stands a fine, big old house, in which Mazzini hid for ten days during one of his escapes from persecution. He was traced to the house; the police knew that he was there and nowhere else, but they utterly failed to find him. The place has upward of sixty rooms, no two of which are on quite the same level as the others. The house is a regular warren of stairs and narrow passages and unexpected hiding-places; it is approached from below by a wide, leisurely staircase from a beautifully proportioned hall with a groined ceiling. As apart from Oneglia, Porto Maurizio too has its harbour protected by long moles. Three stations beyond you come to Taggia just before reaching San Remo —another old town which is becoming gradually modernized, but which nevertheless, with Arma di Taggia, is well worth a day's excursion. Giovanni and I did not go there in the course of this tour, and it, like other places not included in that precise

itinerary, will be found dealt with at the end of the book.

The day following our return from Stellanello Giovanni and I were taken for a long drive by an Italian friend, by way of Oneglia, and then inland to the remote town of Pieve di Teco. Some time after leaving Oneglia your car begins to climb a series of beautifully made military roads. The scenery though fine is comparatively tame after the Valle di Roja, the gradients are less sensational, and the hills round Pieve are more "rolling" than precipitous. Nearer the entrance to the town there is a small, one-arched Roman bridge over a stream, in a fair state of preservation. And beyond the town going eastward along a relatively shallow valley you come by the roadside to an ancient chapel with Romanesque columns, each capital being different from the others, and some early carvings in stone over the door.

From this valley we followed the road, which eventually winds into the wider valley of the Arroscia, along the sea-margin of which are several small towns, and the one important market-town of Albenga. We were destined to stay there for a night later on. From this point westward back to Diano you have to drive along the Cornice road, which at that time was in a singularly vile state of repair, deeply rutted and full of pot-holes. Seeing that the Cornice is not merely an important, but the only

road that follows the coast of Liguria, the motor and horse traffic on it is prodigious. Many stretches of it are absurdly narrow, and in even worse condition than the section just referred to. It is said that the authorities contemplate the general improvement of the Cornice, and that eventually it will be tarred.

Having spent the large part of one day in luxurious and almost vulgar ease, we decided forthwith, since an excellent opportunity offered, to return to peasant simplicity. On a previous visit to this neighbourhood we had made friends with an excellent fellow who earned his living at some cement-works at Oneglia. He lived in a picturesque and withal comfortable cottage in the country outside, with a good garden, a few vines, fig-trees, olives, and almonds. Starting early, we climbed the western range above Diano a little to the north of Capo Berta, passing through the village of Gorlera, which is just below the crest and dropping down first through pine-trees and then olive-groves into the valley beyond. We timed ourselves to arrive at the cottage a little before midday. We were received with a kind of dignified enthusiasm, and were at once commanded to sit down in a little vine-clad arbour, provided with a stone table and a cement seat which ran round three sides of it. The good man immediately and ruthlessly began to denude a peach-tree for our benefit, while his wife and daughter came bustling out of the house with a bottle of wine and a tray of glasses.

Having poured out brimming tumblers, they bustled away again to prepare dinner. Then a young niece of the house suddenly arrived, and invited us very cheerfully to visit her grandmother's grave in the neighbouring cemetery. We gathered that there was just time for this act of devotion before the *past' asciuta* would be ready; so we rose and followed the girl and her uncle up the lane and down a rough track to where, enclosed by high walls against a little old church, was the village cemetery. Then arose a difficulty; neither son nor granddaughter was quite sure where the old lady was buried; they followed the walls along, peering here and there at recorded names or admiring the artificial flowers, made into wreaths and hung on nails by pious survivors. At last, with a little gesture of triumph, the maiden darted forward and pointed. She had recognized the coffee-tin from her own mother's kitchen which had been used to hold the now brown and withered blooms which she had placed in it some weeks before.

When we returned to the cottage an enormous dish of *past' asciuta* was immediately carried steaming from the kitchen door to the arbour. The cement-worker and his niece sat down and ate with us; his wife and daughter in the exercise of hospitality had an occasional snack in between sudden flights to the kitchen, to be sure that the resources of the house were being fully explored for our benefit. If you are

so fortunate as to enjoy an opportunity of accepting peasant hospitality in Italy you should exercise forethought, and if possible train for it. A day's starvation and much vigorous exercise is to be recommended as a good preliminary, while after the orgy there is nothing for it but sleep. Having replenished our glasses, and having reluctantly accepted our final determination to eat no more, our host wished us a very good day and returned to his work. (The lunch-hour for workmen includes a time for siesta, sometimes not taken advantage of for that purpose in Liguria.) There was then the little domain to examine and admire, the donkey to be talked to, the guinea-pigs—bred for food—to be inspected. It rather put me in mind of the way in which the small daughter of a country house at home is prone to victimize the more intimate of her father's guests; only here it was not the daughter but the middle-aged mamma who proudly displayed the guinea-pigs and the moke.

It had been our intention to start back again at about half-past two. But no. Hearing this, the niece with her aunt and the daughter of the house insisted on accompanying us to a neighbouring valley, not on the immediate route of our return, to see some more relations, whom it appeared we had encountered at the cottage last year, and who would be very disappointed if, being so near, they did not see

us again. The least we could do, therefore, was to wander down from terrace to terrace among the olives until we came to a tiny white house which stood alone in a little grove of peach-trees at the bottom. The old couple who lived there were of the same generation as the grandmother in the cemetery —a little black-haired, bird-like, brown, wrinkled woman and a very old man, upright and cheerful, with white hair, whose nose and chin nearly met. He was exactly like one of the caricatures of Leonardo. Their cottage consisted of a tiny bedroom and living-room and the merest cupboard of a kitchen, all on one floor. It was most spotlessly kept, and the sitting-room was decorated with chromo-lithographs of Garibaldi and Umberto I, as well as the present King and Queen. Here again a bottle was produced and glasses, and we must drink to each other's good health. After a few minutes the old lady darted into the kitchen, and returned with a plate bearing a delicacy, of which even in my state of repletion I allowed myself to partake, not only from politeness. The dish in question is much favoured by Italians in the summer, and consists of the flowers of the vegetable-marrow lightly stuffed and fried crisp in oil. We ate them in our fingers with a morsel of bread. These fried flowers were most delicious, and, as always from the hands of a competent cook, the oil is not tasted. After a little talk about the crops and the weather (for it is not only English weather

which makes weight in conversation) we took our leave with many expressions of mutual esteem, and set out on our homeward journey. I may add that the hospitality of that day had been given quite naturally and spontaneously; the well-to-do peasants saw nothing in the least odd in entertaining us in the way they did, while I very speedily forgot to try to imagine what analogous (but how dissimilar!) circumstances at home would have held in store for me. Oh, Lord! what damnable rot is talked in mingling social and political aspects of life! What a pity it is that a greater proportion of the community, into whatever station of life it has pleased God to call them, respectively, cannot be more sure of themselves, less afraid for their dignity, less afraid of what people will "think," less afraid of being patronized, less generally stupid. The fat, jolly, and very efficient cook of some friends of mine in another part of Italy periodically gets a letter from a certain princess in whose employment she once was, who signs herself *sua aff*^{ma} ("yours affect^{ly}") because that is how she feels about it. I know it sounds very absurd, and my question is largely rhetorical, but—will there never come a time when all and sundry follow their natural inclinations in these sorts of ways, instead of following the very narrow ruled lines of some foul, actual or figurative, book of etiquette? As between men, and for one generation, the War did do its bit in this respect; but life is short

and memory is shorter, while the art of inculcating snobbery and self-consciousness into small English boys of any class is very long indeed.

Owing to the kindness of Mrs. Geoffrey Holdsworth (Miss G. B. Stern, the novelist), and of her husband, who live just outside Diano Marina, I was, on that and other occasions, able to see the place from that peculiar and homely point of view which is the privilege of the resident rather than the tourist.

CHAPTER XII

THE BEST INN IN THE WORLD

A STRICT SECRET—OLD FRIENDS—FIGS—ITALIAN TOBACCO—MORE BATHING—LUPO—ICE-CREAM—ABOUT SELTZER WATER AND PRICES—"PIG-MISERY-DOG!"

It was, then, with some slight reluctance that we repacked our rucksacks and set out once more on our eastward tramp from Diano Marina. It was a Sunday, and we arrived at the Best Inn in the World at noon. Beyond saying that it is not far from Cervo, and that it is close to the sea, I quite blandly refuse to be more particular. You, reader, would, I am sure, appreciate the place at its proper value, and will easily be able to find it, if you happen to use that stretch of road. But you have friends or acquaintances, I am afraid, who would want to exploit the place, and start a golf-course in the neighbourhood, and all that this implies. So I think I will keep the Best Inn in the World to myself. And now I come to think of it, I am not so very sure that you will find it very readily, because like many other good things its excellence is not immediately apparent. If beauty were but skin-deep, if quality were guaranteed by

advertisement, there would be little to recommend the place. It has no architectural pretension, it is not especially picturesque, the Italian Riviera at this point is at its quietest and least spectacular. A couple of years before Giovanni, driving along that road, had suddenly desired a cup of coffee. The driver of his carriage knew the inn and was able to recommend the coffee. So they stopped and had some. The year following that, with little more to go upon, I had stayed there for a considerable time.

It was like coming home; it always is when I go to the Best Inn in the World. I walked through the main room and on to the creeper-sheltered terrace beyond, whence, over the landlord's richly fertile garden, full of fruit-trees, I catch a vivid blue glimpse of the sea. They come forward to greet me, the old man, black-eyed and white-moustached, his comfortable wife, and daughter. They make us sit down, and ask us what we will drink to pass the time till lunch is ready. The landlord does most of the cooking himself, and thoroughly he knows his business. The food there is simple and fairly plain, except now and again on festivals, when they kill ducks, or when there has been a catch of some especially delectable fish. On the present occasion Giovanni and I had a glass of vermouth apiece, but the midday meal was almost ready, and we sat down at a little table close to the balustrade of the terrace. There was a dish piled high with a most succulent *risotto,*

in which were small pieces of kidney and mushrooms, or rather *fungi,* for they gather all manner of queer-looking toadstools, often forbidding enough in appearance, but very delicious to eat. Then the daughter of the house ran down to the garden to pick a couple of early *pepperoni,* remembering my particular fondness for them. Peppers, or capsicums, as we call them, are equally good cooked, and I remember many years ago in Greece that they used to stuff them there with rice and meat and vegetables, and stew them wrapped in vine-leaves. They are seldom hot, like the smaller members of their tribe, chilies, and they are very good eaten raw with a pinch of salt and bread and butter. They are also distinguished by being one of the few eatables which are not only not spoiled, but almost improved by being tinned, and in brine.

The second dish on this occasion was a mixed fry of various little fish, not very elegant to look at, but very good for all that. There was a little fat fellow that I have often encountered on that coast, but have never been able to discover a name for; there was a small red mullet and some tiny little sticklebacks of the sardine and anchovy tribe. In passing, it may be observed that fried fresh anchovies, eaten as a sort of large whitebait, take a good deal of beating. The flavour with which we are familiar in the pickled variety is there, distinct, but not nearly so marked. After the fish the daughter of the house

brought, especially for us again, a dish of magnificent early figs—huge fruit just about to burst with ripeness, with a little flash of pink showing here and there in the dark green, like the slashes in the puffed sleeves of the sixteenth century. These early figs are called the "flowers"; and this particular lot were of a darkish colour, something between the white and the purple. For eating fresh, they are never so good as in the first crop. The September fig can, however, be very excellent, sweet and juicy, but with much less flavour. The white growth of that period are the sort used for drying.

Well fed, with red wine low in our glasses, and the immediate prospect of coffee, we leaned back in our chairs and felt that life was very good. Between us and the sea the air seemed visibly to shimmer in the blazing sun. Fowls somewhere near at hand clucked, a dog barked, children giggled. There you have three sounds which are practically universal; add to these the pumping of water from a well, the rattle of wheels upon a road, the sudden roar of a distant train emerging from a tunnel, and you come away from the primitive to the commonplace without disturbing your serenity. And there is one extra, ancient enough, if not primitive, commonplace in all conscience, which makes perfect such a moment of physical ease, namely, tobacco. The cigarettes most commonly in use in all classes and conditions in Italy are called *Macedonia,* being mildly Turkish in flav-

our, but mixed, I think, with some other tobacco, probably of a kind such as we associate with Virginia. For general use on all occasions *Macedonia* are very good indeed, especially when, as more frequently happens now than formerly, they are well made. There is a somewhat higher grade made of similar tobacco, and rather more expensive, which is distinguished by the word *esportazione,* as well as two or three other brands, one of which is something like pure Virginian, and another reminiscent of French *caporal.* The commonest cigars are called *toscani.* These are long, somewhat twisted, and rather virulent. The Italian working man usually cuts them in half, putting the second instalment behind his ear or in his hatband. Giovanni smokes them right through. There are better and much milder cigars, called *mingetti.* These are not connoisseurs' cigars, but they do very well. In the matter of pipe-tobacco, I confess to a sort of Anglo-American insularity, if my meaning is clear. That is to say, I smoke a tobacco which is grown in Virginia (or at all events said to be), and which is cut and put up into tins in England. This, being a commonplace, hard tobacco, and very popular, is generally sold at any tobacconist's abroad where there is a likelihood of British custom. So, by the way, are certain of the mixtures.

Giovanni, then, with this *toscana,* I with a succession of cigarettes, which I smoke till coffee is but a memory, decided lazily that a little glass of cognac

apiece would be agreeable and that really there was no vital need to pursue our journey that day.

"Or to-morrow either," said Giovanni, and gave his reason. We would have a little dinner-party there the following evening. People frequently passed along the road toward Diano and back. Some one should be, as it were, roped in that afternoon to carry our invitation and to bring back the reply. So that was soon settled.

That afternoon Giovanni and I, carrying bathing-dresses, strolled down to a little cove girt with rocks, where I had been used to bathe the previous year. Generally one had it to oneself; sometimes the place was shared by a priest from the neighbouring village. But the regular bathers who stay at the Best Inn prefer the more crowded society of the open beach. Here we had to walk cautiously over crowded, rounded pebbles, till the water was deep enough to sink into; but a little way out there is a flat rock on to which one can climb, and from which one can take a header. We swam for a time, then lay and basked in the sun, then swam again.

And what keen joy it is happily to repeat the exact and trivial circumstances of previous happy occasions! Every yard of that way from the cove back to the inn was familiar; the sliding, ankle-testing walk of a few yards over the bank of small pebbles, the climb up a short declivity covered with rough grass and samphire, the crossing of the railway-line,

and the hundred yards along the track from sleeper to sleeper (This isn't allowed, but what matter?), the wide, upward step from the railway over a ditch to the bank beyond it, the seizing of a post between strands of barbed wire, the cautious shifting of first one leg and then the other over the wire stay, which is intended to prevent this precise action, the scramble up the hillside beyond, under olive-trees, on to a legitimate path, past the little old seventeenth-century shrine, down into the dry bed of a stream, stooping low under a culvert beneath the railway again, and then past the backs of other gardens to the inn once more. It sounds commonplace enough, but do that in just the same way twice a day for eight weeks, and the ground that you have covered becomes a permanent part of your life.

Later on there was the landlord's son and his wife to go and visit. They keep a general shop and a small *café* a little way from the inn. The son is also the village baker, and for all the primitive conditions of the place his dough is made with an electric mixer; for in a country with a plentiful supply of water-power electricity is cheap, and in general use, anyhow, as a means of light, in quite small cottages in sequestered byways.

We had, of course, to drink at this little *café* and to admire the latest addition to the family, not an infant, but a lovely, lithe young wolf-dog, who came squirming along the floor to us on his belly, uttering

odd growling noises intended for friendly conversation. Dario and his wife were extremely fond of this dog, Lupo, but were not above teasing him. And of all forms of teasing the one he could not bear, and I don't know that he lacks my sympathy, is the sound of a mouth-organ. His mistress took one of these abominations from her store, and proceeded to play upon it. Lupo uttered a sort of scream, and, leaping in the air, tried to get at the thing. Finally, having shaken the lady's skirts in vain, having leapt over chairs and sacks of flour on to the counter in order to reach the source of that, to him, agonizing din, he put his tail between his legs and bolted upstairs to the bedrooms.

There was also the post-mistress to pass the time of day with, the barber, and the old woman who kept the salt and tobacco shop, which was also a small *café,* and who, moreover, did a trade, especially in the bathing season, in ice-creams. At home those of us who have been carefully brought up have learned to regard the stuff sold from a barrow, and known years ago in London as hokey-pokey, with suspicion, well founded enough for all I know; but I do know also that the itinerant vendor of ices in Italy buys his wares at some local factory which purveys the same mixtures to the best hotels and *cafés.* "Cream" *is* a misleading term, but the ices, though not rich, are perfectly wholesome and amazingly cheap.

They are made for the most part, for example, with fresh eggs, and not with that unspeakable material so widely used in England, and called, humorously enough, custard-powder. Here, again, the necessities of an ardent climate have made ice a commonplace of even a poor man's every day. Almost every little town has its ice-factory; and ice, which is only within the reach of people having comfortable means at home, is here very plentiful and very cheap.

While on this subject of comparative prices, why is it that we in England who drink a good deal of soda-water put up with current prices? The relationship between the cost of manufacture and the price paid by the consumer must surely be very distant? I will readily admit that the best soda-water or seltzer to be got in England is very much better than that usually purveyed on the Continent; but the ordinary siphon here contains a beverage very similar to the siphons which the waiter at any Parisian or Italian *café* puts on the table, so that you may help yourself without extra charge.

Well, then, with a siphon between us on the terrace table, glasses, and a carafe of wine, Giovanni and I awaited dinner that night at the Best Inn in the World. Presently somebody started to play a guitar, while another fellow, tilting back his chair against the railings of the vine-clad terrace, began to sing. It was, as I have said, Sunday evening, and a

number of cheery young peasants began to collect before dinner for a simple impromptu entertainment. A delicious breeze was blowing from the sea, and the scent of the fig-trees filled the place with a warm fragrance.

Presently I began to recognize old friends. The grey-bearded colonel, who lived in a cottage opposite and had his meals at the inn, came to play cards with the landlord, whose wife was now busy in the kitchen. Lina, the little servant-girl, grinned widely at me as she passed by laden with drinks for the musicians. The deaf and dumb *marchese,* who also always feeds here, often with the humblest of his workmen, and worse dressed than they, made a sign for his glass to be refilled; while Tric, the little dog who grew fond of me a year ago, who leaped at me when I returned, and who had never for a moment left me since, was lying curled up asleep on the next chair. In fact the only fly in the ointment was the fly and his several relations who refused to be driven away even by Giovanni's cigar.

When I had stopped here the previous year they had charged me what in English money came to three shillings a day for everything; and refused to take extra drinks into account if, as sometimes happened, I did not pay for them on the nail. Twice I was ill, and for a few days did not eat my meals regularly. Quite forgetting or ignoring the dainty little omelettes, the cognac and so on that they had

brought to my room, these good folk were anxious to deduct an absurd sum from my bill.

Over the door, looking sadly down the road, sat an old man who had spent most of his life working in the docks at Marseilles. Not long ago he had returned to his native Italy to spend his remaining years. He was terribly poor, and the year before I had been used to call him the First Footman, for he had busied himself about the place, helped in the kitchen, cleaned the terrace, and swept out the general shop, which was a side-issue of the inn. Since then the poor old boy had suffered a stroke, and was unable to do anything useful. But he still lived here. And he was by no means the only lame dog that the *padrone* helped over a stile when opportunity arose.

And then there was the old scamp whose fondness for red wine was stronger than his head. (To hardened Northerners the incapacity of many people in wine-growing countries to consume the native beverages without the fact becoming apparent with an absurd speed is a matter for some amazement. On the whole, however, extremely few overstep the very modest mark.) This man was just a little bit of a nuisance. His gesticulations were a thought too wild; he came and talked to me more than I wanted, and told me of the time, years ago, that he spent in London, and how he remembered Charing Keross Place.

"Pig-misery-dog!" he swore to the world at large, not specifically at me, "I have been there. I am not

lying. Pig-misery-dog! I know that Regent Street is by Ossford Street."

The *padrone's* dignity in dealing with this fellow was inimitable. He raised his eyebrows very slightly, made a small gesture of disgust with finger and thumb, and the man collapsed. But I am glad to have known the scamp, for one of the tasks upon which he was employed in London had a homely appeal for me. Tens of thousands of my countrymen and I must at one time or another have trodden upon his handiwork, namely, the swan in mosaic at the entrance to the old Swan and Edgar's. I am also grateful to him for teaching me the wholly delicious oath, *Porco-miseria-cane!* (The substance of the oath is in the first two words, the third may be varied as occasion arises. Pig-misery-thief! is a common form when called for.)

One way or another, the *padrone* and his wife are people of substance, but they never put on airs. The *signora* is just the comfortable old body she always was, as well as a dear old soul; while her husband has only to put on the sort of clothes he never will put on to look a typical grandee. With his white, close-cropped head, his fine, hooked nose, his big, sweeping white moustache, strong chin and deep-set dark eyes, he is a magnificent specimen of the Italian peasantry.

In despite of the flies I had been trying to write, but it was no good. I had to stop and pay heed. All

the village lads came on to the terrace to listen, a second guitar struck up, and a man who *could* sing sang. I watched them; they were rapt. Among the lot there was not one unintelligent face. One big-eyed boy, obviously carried away, sat staring straight before him with all the wild romance of youth caught on his lips. Another, an older man, a sailor, sat with a grim chin down upon his chest and a deep frown. The old colonel and the *padrone* with their respective partners played their cards unmoved, as befitted grey-headed men.

The previous year there had been four strapping young fellows working upon a sailing-vessel which was being built in the neighbourhood. They too dined here every day. Two of them were strikingly good-looking men, not "typically Italian" in appearance, but such as could easily have passed for sergeants in a British regiment of Guards. If they did feed in their shirt-sleeves (as I did), their manners were charming, and it was another little pleasure for me to find them still there, and to hear their jolly "Good appetite to you!" as we sat down at our table.

Talking of "typically Italian" men recalls for me the Academy pictures and Christmas supplements of the eighties. One was brought up to assume—I don't mean deliberately—that all Italians had flashing eyes and oily ringlets. These conceptions were no doubt derived from brief trips to Naples (including

a conducted tour of Pompeii and the craters of Vesuvius). The Italians of the Alps and the Piemonte are often fair; while one night at the Best Inn I sat next to a stone-mason whose face might well have inspired Praxiteles, so perfectly did it conform to the old Greek ideal of beauty.

CHAPTER XIII

TO ALBENGA

A DINNER-PARTY—A VILLAGE "FESTA"—ANDORA CASTELLO—LAIGUELIA—ALASSIO—A BIG ENGLISH COLONY—RAIN—FRIED OCTOPUS.

On the following evening Giovanni and I had our little dinner-party. A man passing the Best Inn had taken the note and brought back the answer on the return journey; and our friends duly arrived in a car. Now, if there is one thing in the world that an Italian peasant, be he innkeeper or servant, likes better than another it is something in the nature of a party. He thoroughly enters into the spirit of hospitality. The servant sees to it that his master's house lives up to or makes a reputation; and our *padrone* and his wife, quite as much for our sakes as their own, saw to it that our guests were well treated. Somebody was to be entertained—it was up to them to see that the entertainment was unexceptionable. If some little surprise for your guests and for you can be brought off, so much the better. Knowing that we were in perfectly safe hands, we left all details to the *padrone*. Our confidence was not

misplaced. The meal was quite a simple one, admirably cooked, the wine was of the best locally obtainable. The surprise was the "pudding." In this happy land "puddings" as we understand the word are rare. Ordinarily you finish your meals with fruit. But in this part of Italy, at all events, they make the most wonderful cakes; roughly speaking, a flat sponge sandwich soaked in some liqueur, with jam, cream, or chocolate inside, and an imposing decoration of candied fruit on the top. (Are not Genoa cakes, often dreadfully transmuted, current in Great Britain as a rival to the product of Dundee?) The Best Inn in the World does not provide such sophisticated luxuries, but the old *padrone,* knowing our guests and the sort of thing they would really enjoy, put on his coat and his best hat and made a railway journey, and occupied his afternoon in going to a neighbouring town where there is a first-class pastrycook. The meal was finished with the finest fruit that he could find in his garden.

The day following we naturally expected some reference to the party in our bill. Not at all. What were two extra people to dinner? They charged for the cake at a price much below what I should have got it for myself, and left it at that. Ordinarily you know what you have to pay there, and you pay it. But this occasion had been a little different. There was the party, and quite a number of extras—mostly of the liquid sort. Knowing my landlady of old, I

had kept a tally of these, for she had not, and read it out to her. She wrote the items down on the margin of a newspaper. Then, seeing that the total came to more than she intended to charge us, she scratched it all out and named a round sum, which, from her point of view, was simply silly. No, she would not listen to a word more.

"You are old friends. If I charge you little you will come again," she said.

With all due apologies I have to mention this matter of sixpences, because I can't think that there are many people of that kind left on this commercialized earth. No—once again nothing will induce me to tell you more exactly where the Best Inn in the World is. I am keeping that very strictly to myself.

There are one or two pleasant little cottages on the hillside above that inn which belong to the *padrone*. Especially I have my eye on one. It has a small, delightful garden, at present blazing with geraniums, a fine fig-tree, some nespoli, and a grove of olives. Before very long it will be to let . . . and . . . one will sit outside it under the vine and watch the sunlight on the scarcely rippled sea, one will go down to the inn for one's meals, and life will be very peaceful. The old colonel used to say that he lived there because he could dress as he liked (and he did), and that is another reason which attracts me to the place. If I turned up one night in a boiled shirt and a white waistcoat, I am sure that the

padrone is far too well bred to notice the eccentricity though his young daughter might exclaim *"Che eleganza!"*—youthful exuberance having momentarily overcome decorum. But the shirt, trousers, and canvas shoes of usual routine are what is expected of me.

So I left the Best Inn in the World with a lump in my throat, but with hope in my heart.

The excellence of the *padrone* persisted, I found, after we left him, for he recommended an inn to us at Albenga, farther along the coast towards Genoa. And this we come to in its turn.

There was, we heard, a *festa* at Riva Feraldi, a tiny village scattered among trees in the hills, about two hours' walk from the Best Inn. We decided that it would be fun to go there. Riva Feraldi sounds imposing, but is, in fact, an extremely poor place, and the houses are for the most part in sad need of repair. They are on all levels, divided by narrow, roughly cobbled, steeply sloping alleys; here a byre is approached by a flight of stone steps, there the village inn is embowered among big trees. On this day almost every house had pasted upon it brightly coloured strips of paper which warned sinners that it was foolish or wicked to swear.

Looking back to the south, we could see the rich valley up which we had come, with its peach-orchards and the dark, lacquered green of clustering orange-trees, and beyond that the intense blue of the

sea. East and north the prospect was entirely closed by tree-clad hills, but to the west you could look across a narrow valley to the steep pastures which rose almost to the skyline.

On our arrival at noon we found that we had been misinformed as to the time, for the only sign of a *festa* was a large circular space barricaded with branches, among which were intertwined some strips of coloured paper, of similar kind, but without the printed words, to those pasted on the houses. We filled in the interval by lunching at the inn, where, by the grace of God, the good woman had ready an enormous and succulent dish of *ravioli;* this was followed by bread and cheese, a rather sharp wine (to be honest), but an excellent bowl of black coffee. Afterwards we sauntered up the bed of the stream, where still, in the height of summer, a little water was running, and where deep, clear pools reflected the tumbled rocks above them.

The *festa* eventually began at about three o'clock, with a procession round the little *piazza* before the church; but some time was lost owing to the attractions offered by a woman with ice-creams, brought up in a pail (by cart) from the coast, to the younger members of the congregation. She did a roaring trade before the *parocco* and the four neighbouring clergy who were to assist him contrive with great good-humour to get the children away.

At length the bells rang out to be echoed and re-

echoed from the encircling hills, and the little procession was formally drawn up—tiny children in white, older girls in their veils, two old men carrying banners of magenta brocade, on one side of which were chromo-lithographed pictures. Following them came a little boy with the flag of his infant school. Benefits accrue to anyone who carries Ornaments in such a procession, but the boy was really too small for the task. He did not look very closely where he was going, and kept entangling his flag with the banners in front, so that every now and again, as the procession wound its way about the *piazza,* one of the nuns who was walking with the children had to come to the rescue, for the dignity of the two old gentlemen with the banners could not be disturbed. Then came some girls carrying a statue of the Madonna with lit candles, then the clergy intoning, though owing to the bells it was quite impossible to recognize a word of the chants. More old men, six in number, now came carrying a huge scene in plaster of the Ascension, followed by four others with beautiful old brass lanterns on poles with lit candles inside. After the procession had completed the circuit of the *piazza* it passed into the church, where a service was held, and where, I have no doubt, though I did not hear it, a simple and homely sermon was preached.

It was that very matter-of-courseness which gave such an air of serenity to the whole scene. To be

sure, the children left the church from time to time in order to visit the lady with the ices; it was a very hot day. But they went dutifully back again to say their prayers.

Later on the *festa* proceeded upon more secular lines. An amateur jazz-band was formed, the instruments being a concertina, a guitar, a drum, a bell, and castanets. All the people of Riva Feraldi and many visitors from villages near by were there, crowding up the steep pathway from the church to the higher part of the village, where, in the barricaded circle, the young people in their best clothes danced with all the serious correctitude of a pre-War Sergeants' Ball. A boy with a big bucket of water, in which were placed bottles of beer and lemonade, came and sat beside me and turned philosophic but rather saddened eyes upon his female rival with the ices, who had also carried her pail up the hill.

We left Riva Feraldi at about six, but, turning now and again on our way, we saw the twilight spangled with rough illuminations; while later on every now and then a rocket tore its way into the darkness and burst in golden showers.

As already suggested, with all their childlike love of gaiety, and their childlike simplicity and very frequent generosity, the Italian's is not a childlike outlook on the world at large. But these peasants, at any rate, take their pleasures and their religion side by side, with great directness, nor do they see any-

thing incongruous or irreverent in alternating prayer and ice-cream.

The following day we spent two or three hours in wandering about the Andora valley. From the Cornice road, at a point half a mile or so from the railway-station, we descended some steep, unguarded steps by the side of a bridge which crosses the river at this place, and struck inland along a narrow path which proceeds through cane-brakes and past trim gardens towards Andora Castello. First, however, close to the road we observed a very fine old house, probably of the seventeenth century, which is now used as a sort of hostel for relays of school-children who during the summer months come there for a fortnight or so for bathing and the sun cure from the big towns. There are many of these establishments along the coast. They are magnificent institutions, for the children live half naked out of doors, and are well fed and cared for.

On either side of the wide river-bed, which, except for a few pools, was dry, there were masses of pink oleander, and here and there between the cane-brakes delightful patches of short, soft turf. The route that we were following ran parallel to the road that we had descended from Andora proper and Stellanello a few days before, and is crossed just beneath Andora Castello by a track which passes over a very fine five-arched Roman bridge. From the top of this the view right and left over the fertile valley is ex-

traordinarily peaceful. Here and there you see the clustering buildings of a small farm, and here again, peeping from the trees, the red roof of a tiny cottage, and there against the hillside far away the more imposing structure of a fine old house. Turning eastward, we began to ascend the steep knoll upon which Andora Castello stands. On the summit are the ruins of a medieval castle, and beside it a small church which has been restored. Clustering along the brow of the hill round and about the castle are the houses of a tiny village, which are to be approached only through the ancient archway. Here again it was impossible not to stand for a while and gaze about us at the valley and the surrounding hills. We had brought our lunch with us, and camped for an hour or so beneath the ruined walls. Our plan now was to avoid the Cornice road for a few miles, and to strike down into the valley and up the hill to the east in order to meet it again at the little town of Laiguelia. On the top of the hill, which commanded a view both of that morning's walk and our destination, there is the village of Colla Michele, once, in a distant past, a place of considerable importance, with its own laws and its own government. Now there are but a dozen cottages of the poorest description, and not even an inn; but the lady who gave us this dismal information was, however, able to purvey us a bottle of wine. Eastward from this place, the path led us under the shade of many fine

"umbrella" pines, which grow in abundance above the bay.

Laiguelia is a small town which practically adjoins Alassio. Until quite lately it was a purely "Italian" resort, and remained charmingly unsophisticated. Now, however, its nearness to a large English colony has enhanced its prices, and no doubt increased its prosperity. The town is full of old houses of much architectural charm, and the main road passes under frequent arches through the midst of them, and is so narrow that you can almost span it with your arms. It is a splendid place for those who like shallow bathing, for a firm sandy beach stretches on either side for a considerable distance. Half an hour's walk now brought us to Alassio. Here the hills rise steeply up from the sea, and, while the old town occupies a narrow strip of shore, these hills are crowded—indeed, over-crowded—with small villas. In the town itself there are several big hotels and many small ones, a couple of good restaurants, and various *stabilimenti* for dancing and bathing. In many ways Alassio is an attractive place for English people and Americans who like to live among their own countrymen. (There were, for example, 3000 of them there in the winter of 1924–25.) There is a large English club, excellent tennis-courts, an English church with a resident chaplain and curate, and one of the best English libraries in Italy. Economi-

Photo E. N. I. T., London

ALASSIO

Photo E. N. I. T., London

SAN REMO

cally speaking, Alassio naturally suffers (or from its own point of view prospers) owing to the large number of foreign residents, many of them permanent. But for all that, prices compare very favourably with English ones, even when allowance has been made for the exchange. The staple necessities of life are, in more cases than not, definitely cheaper in Italy.

The main street of the old town is by the English colony libellously known as "the Drain." In actual fact it smells no worse than any narrow street in any warm place. The shops are adequate; there is a good English-speaking chemist, and at least one butcher who can be prevailed upon to cut up meat into recognizable joints. The place is thoroughly healthy, well drained, has an English school and English doctors.

Giovanni and I were in two minds whether to walk on to Albenga, where we were to spend the night, or to take a bus which would be starting in half an hour. Our course was decided by rain, which only for the second time since I had left Modane fell upon us. I know few things more devastating to one's *moral* than walking in very thin clothes with a very heavy pack in a steady downpour. We retired, therefore, into a small *café* near the station until the bus was ready to start.

Nothing of great interest is missed by driving

instead of walking along that stage. A mile away in the sea between Alassio and Albenga rises the islet of Gallinaria, which is privately owned, and to which access is now no longer allowed. This is a pity from the tourist's point of view, for the journey made a good excursion. There is a castle with a private chapel on the top of the rock, and the garden shelves down from it. It would be no doubt a romantic place to live on, but for those who don't definitely hate their fellow-men a thought lonesome.

Albenga is still a market-town of some importance, though it is obvious that the importance has decreased. When we arrived the downpour was still almost of tropical violence; we had to leave the bus and get wet, we both felt ill-tempered, and the prospect of roughing it was depressing. For we thought from the first glance at the very modest *albergo,* to which we had been recommended by our friend the *padrone* of the Best Inn, that we were in for a very rough time. What is merely picturesque in the sunshine and among the hills is definitely squalid in the town and wet weather. But we need not have feared. I shall never have any misgivings again in regard to any recommendation from that good man. The *albergo* was certainly rough and bare; but if it was not garnished it was reasonably well swept, and the food was unexceptionable, including the finest cherries I have ever seen. There is no meretricious inducement to enter Balzarotti's; merely that name

is stencilled on the shabby wall above an open door hung with a brown curtain. We pushed the curtain aside and found ourselves in a considerable room, lit on the far side by a window which overlooked a small courtyard, which in turn gave upon the stable of a big grey mare. Through the window and over the half-door we could see her enjoying her evening meal.

Bedrooms were found for us opposite. Here we left our packs and changed our clothes, handing over the wet things to a pleasant old lady, who promised to dry them for us. When we returned to the restaurant several people were sitting there, waiting for their dinner—not by any means all of them the sort of people that you would expect in that sort of place. But that, as already pointed out, is one of the little surprises that Italy constantly has in store for you. One knows, worse luck, or knows of so many Englishmen who "would not be seen" at Balzarotti's, if, so to speak, it were near their place of business. It would prejudice the opinion of the Managing Director; feeding at Balzarotti's is "not done." Italians, on the other hand, go where the food is good, and the food was very good indeed. *Minestrone,* very rich and plentiful, and a mixed fry of fish, containing *calamaretti*—that is, young octopus. *(N.B.* It must be young, or it becomes like the somewhat inferior indiarubber provided by Government Offices.) Young and skilfully fried in oil, it is delicious, not

unlike lobster, the tentacles (which in larger instances hatefully embrace the heroes or villains of melodramatic literature) being especially delectable. Once again, remember that oil is only the medium of frying, and should not—and, treated by a good cook, does not—enter into the flavour of the dish.

CHAPTER XIV

FROM ALBENGA TO FINAL MARINA

ANCIENT TOWERS—A DEAL IN MULBERRIES—VILLANUOVA—A STRANGE DIALECT—BALESTRINO—FINAL MARINA AND FINAL BORGO—HOTEL RUSTICHELLI—PERTI.

My curiosity with regard to Albenga had been aroused before now, when passing it in the train. For there are a number of old towers of different proportions and heights grouped together in the middle of the town, which demanded closer inspection. From whatever aspect you look at Albenga, from the wide Arroscia valley to the north or east, or from the coast, you see it as a close-packed, flat town, from which these tall red-brick towers stand up impressively. At one time it was walled, and much of the walls remain. From the eastern side you still enter Albenga through a tall arched gateway, some way beyond which a permanently dried river-bed is crossed by a fine Roman bridge. Architecturally the place deserves expert attention; the *façade* of the *duomo* is interesting. Beside it rises the finest of the towers, which takes its name from the Marchesi di Balestrino, who were the great lords

of that district from early times, and whose family still persist and hold property in the neighbourhood. The fifth-century baptistry behind the cathedral is more interesting than beautiful. It is sunk some twelve feet or so below the level ground, but is trenched about so that one can see it. It is lit by unglazed windows framed variously with curiously carved stonework. A small present to the guardian unlocks the door, within which there are a number of stone coffins and other relics. At the back of this baptistry there is a miniature *piazza,* which takes its name from some fine lions carved in marble couched there on pedestals.

In the *duomo* there are some singularly fine manuscripts and illuminated missals which are not nearly as well known as they ought to be. These are for the most part of the fifteenth century, and include a large folio Bible, and breviary having the arms of the Bishops of Albenga. The illuminated books of music are numerous and interesting.

The morning after our arrival, and before exploring Albenga itself, we walked inland up the valley to the village of Villanuova, which lies about three miles from Albenga in a fork of the river, and is completely walled. Battlemented towers stand at short intervals round its circumference.

The weather was glorious again, but the mud caused by yesterday's rain was still heavy on the road, so that the going except for a narrow path at

one side was vile. Some little way out of the town we met an old peasant-woman on this path who wished us "Good-day," and promptly stepped into the deep mud of the roadway so that we might pass by dry. It was only decent to step likewise into the mud, and to indicate the path with a gesture. But no, the *signori* must have preference. A trifling instance of good manners based upon goodwill and not upon books of etiquette; quite trifling, quite unimportant, but—how refreshing in a go-getting world!

Along this road there are a number of pleasant houses, some ancient and dignified, several approached from fine gateways set in high walls beside the way. After a little while we met a man carrying a big basket of ripe mulberries. It was now very hot. I have already made occasion to observe that I am greedy about fruit. I am very fond of mulberries; I had never tasted them in Italy. I asked the man whether he had any for sale. Yes—any number up there on the hillside where he lived, but these he had picked for the old gentleman who lived in that house; and he pointed. However, he would ask. So he trotted off before we could stop him, and presently returned, much to my embarrassment and Giovanni's amusement, with the old gentleman for whom he had picked the mulberries. And the old gentleman courteously bade me take what I wanted. We passed the time of day while a boy was sent to a little wayside shop to get a piece of paper. A pound

or so of mulberries were then duly packed up with a couple of peaches as make-weight; a trifling coin went in exchange, we all thanked each other very heartily, Giovanni and I were wished a good journey, and we went our several ways. The mulberries, I am bound to admit, were inferior; neither for size nor for flavour did they come near the slowly ripened English kind.

On our arrival at Villanuova we found that it was the *festa* of S. Giovanni, and all the men were idle. Most of the women were taking their turn at drawing water from the great well in the middle of the main street, each bringing a large copper vessel and ladle to take the water from a strange boat-shaped bucket also of copper, and evidently of great age. Villanuova is uncommonly picturesque, but decidedly squalid. There is, however, a clean and well-kept *osteria* just outside the walls, where a good glass of wine apiece refreshed us. We did not feed there, but I have no doubt that you can get a good dish of *pasta* or *risotto*.

On the way back we noticed what we had missed on the outward journey, a big sculptured figure, probably of Roman provenance, which had been let into the wall protecting the garden of a big villa. This is about a mile out of Albenga, and on the east side of the road. A little way before this we had been overtaken by a man driving a mule-cart. He offered us a lift, which we accepted, and we sat three abreast

Photo Humphrey Lynch

ALBENGA: THE PORTICO OF THE DUOMO

Photo E. N. I. T., London

ALBENGA THE TOWERS

on the loose board, and the mule, realizing the sudden addition to its burden, behaved characteristically. A character in Mr. Montague's admirable novel *Rough Justice* happily addresses one of these beasts as illegitimate. If only he could be made so! The brute, determined to be revenged upon us, persisted on pulling towards the wrong side of the road, which, besides being wrong in the technical sense, was very especially wrong from our point of view, because it was quite unprotected now and onward from a considerable drop to the bed of the river. It was all very well for our gentleman to call him *"brutta bestia,"* but it required all his strength to keep the animal and, more important, the cart on the roadway at all. It was on the whole a more terrifying experience than the descent from the Col di Tenda. A diversion was caused for a moment by the driver's observation to Giovanni, to whom I had been speaking in English, that my dialect was strange to him. He himself spoke Genoese, but understood Italian. My language was entirely beyond him, he supposed I came from somewhere in the extreme south, or maybe one of the regained provinces in the north.

"It is indeed a strange dialect," said Giovanni with a straight face, and left it at that.

The rest of that day we spent in exploring Albenga, and the following morning set out along the Cornice road towards Final Marina. For those

who have the ambition to be nearly first in a field of pleasant discovery, the Arroscia valley round Albenga and the strip of coast beyond it to the east are to be warmly recommended. Every little town and village in that neighbourhood has some distinctive feature, architecturally speaking, while the setting of the whole, with its background of rugged mountains, is impressively beautiful. The land is extraordinarily fertile, and the clear atmosphere suggests a certain richness and earthly prosperity. The very place-names are full of poetry—Ceriale, Santo Spirito, Loano, Pietraligure. Each of these little towns has some fine *palazzo* or little old castle with pepper-box turrets at its corners, while everywhere old church-towers raise their tall columns above the surrounding roofs. Between Santo Spirito and Loano there is one point from which, at all events in the train, you may look up a valley which runs to the north-west, to where some eight miles away a great square castle stands desolate among the hills. Nobody seems to know the place, chiefly because it is only for that one instant that it can be seen from the outside world, until by walking or driving you approach close to it. The castle and the little village which nestles at its foot is called Balestrino, and is still inhabited by the Caretto family, to whom that title belongs. At one time they were virtually kings of that province, and their power and influence were widely felt.

These coast-towns between Albenga and Final Marina are connected, apart from the train, by a series of local horse-trams; in two of which during that day we covered considerable distances when overtaken by fits of laziness. Also we wished to reach Final Marina before dark.

Our recommendation to the Hôtel Rustichelli facing the sea here came from the manservant about whom I have already related an incident regarding his master's evening trousers. In more respects than one that good man knows what is what, so that I was delighted but not surprised to find that Signor and Signora Rustichelli knew it too. Like many other of the smaller hotels that I have stayed at along that coast, this one is quite simple and unpretentious; no money has been wasted upon flashy adornments, for example. It is beautifully clean, thoroughly comfortable, and the cooking is first rate. The hotel is, moreover, quite "civilized" in the English meaning of the word, and English people stay there in the winter. The climate of Final Marina is bracing, and some parts of the town are exposed to wind from the north, but the Hôtel Rustichelli is well protected from behind, and faces due south. And on another occasion I have sat out in front of it in February sunshine with great contentment.

After dinner on the night of our arrival Giovanni and I went for a stroll through the narrow streets of the town. There are several really good shops,

while the Café Ivaldi has an air of well-polished excellence which along that strip of coast was rather surprising. Clean and pleasant *cafés* there are in abundance, but there was a touch of distinction about this one, as there is about certain old-fashioned and locally famous bun-shops in county towns at home. A little way beyond, still in the main street, there is a first-rate barber's shop, and here, while I had my hair cut, the master of the establishment, seeing that we were strangers, told Giovanni of certain things in the neighbourhood which ought to be seen: the almost adjoining town of Final Borgo, and beyond that the Castel Gavone and the village of Perti. There were too, he told us, some interesting caverns in the headland of Caprazoppa, round which we had come that evening, though in the event we did not go and see them. Before leaving the shop, the barber entertained us with a dismal tune which he whistled, informing us that it was the latest "foss-trot." The good man was, as it happened, a more than merely competent musician; he had for a long time played a fiddle in an orchestra at Monaco, and the next year I saw him leading the orchestra at a *Mi-carême* ball in the theatre at Final Marina.

The following morning, after our early coffee, we set out through the town along the road to the north. There are three places now adjoining, Final Marina, Final Pia, and Final Borgo. The first two stretch along the seashore, and there is nothing to tell

you where one begins and the other ends. In both you see hints of a Spanish influence in the architecture, which reminds the student that the Spaniards had a settlement along this part of the coast. A horse-tram runs the mile to Final Borgo, but for once we did not take advantage of it, but enjoyed a leisurely tramp in the golden morning, along a road now deeply laid in dust again, past many charming old houses and beneath towering cypresses. On the hillside above us to the right, just beyond the railway, is a small Carthusian monastery. The actual entrance to Final Borgo, which is completely walled, and like the village of Villanuova lies in the fork of a river, is approached over a bridge and through a high-arched gate, emblazoned with the arms of the Carettos. It is quite a small place, but well worth a prolonged scrutiny. It seems to be very little known, and is a delightful little town set in beautiful country. The cathedral of S. Biagio is very fine, having many altars exquisitely inlaid with coloured marbles in a variety of simple but well-balanced designs. The chapel of S. Caterina is particularly to be noticed. This cathedral contains among other things one of the most ingenious pieces of faking I have ever seen. You walk up the nave towards the beautiful marble rails before the high altar, and you see what appears to be fine, shimmering lace hung over the balustrade. I for one was entirely deceived by this. It is not until you come actually to touch this

lace that you discover it for what it is, wonderfully carved marble, with its salient folds more highly polished than the rest and very slightly gilt. At a distance of a few feet this gives the precise appearance of light shining through the lace. Really it is a vile trick, and personally I hate shams of that sort on principle, but I cannot restrain a kind of wry admiration for the consummate cleverness of the craftsmen who, centuries ago, made it. How they must have chuckled to themselves on the completion of their task!

The pulpit, though ugly, is interesting, being the original from which that at St. Peter's in Rome is precisely copied. There are other matters of interest in the cathedral, reference to which will be found in the Appendix.

There are three exits from Borgo: the gateway through which we came in; another, also decorated with the Caretto arms, and supporting an old clock, approached by a bridge over the western branch of the river; and a third leading out to the steep hillside to the north.

First of all, however, it is worth crossing the narrow western bridge in order to see the ancient walled town, much as it must have looked in the sixteenth century. Barred windows appear here and there in the walls, and you realize that before the days of serviceable artillery it must have been a difficult

place to attack. But that artillery of some kind was provided against is shown by the extraordinary shape of the keep of the Castle Gavone, which stands on the northern hilltop overlooking the town. All that remains of the castle is the medieval keep, with a tower facing the sea, shaped like the bow of a battleship, presumably so that missiles flung against it from the south should glance off. On the other hand, each stone of this tower, which is a rich yellow colour, is cut like a diamond, coming to a point in the middle. This, you would have thought, would have tended to defeat the means by which cannonballs would be deflected. The ruined keep occupies the whole of the hilltop, and is protected on the three other sides by precipitous rocks.

From the back of the Castle Gavone, where we sat on the grass and smoked for a while, we saw just below us and to the north one of the prettiest little villages we had yet come to. There were an old octagonal church with a few cottages huddled about it, some superbly dignified cypresses on either side of the door standing like huge black pencils against the rich green mountain-side, and round and about and down in the deep valley below gardens everywhere, rich with fruit and flowers. We climbed down from the keep and approached this village. It is called Perti, and the patron of the church is S. Eusebio.

The church door was locked, so we knocked at the neighbouring house to ask for the key. This house turned out to be the home of the *parocco* himself, who lived there with his mother and sisters, subsisting almost entirely upon what they grew. Since those days I have paid several visits to Perti, and the *parocco* is my very good friend, but I shall never forget my first visit to the little place, the whole atmosphere of which is extraordinarily warm with a sense of peace and quiet contentment. When we arrived the priest himself was out, helping his mother with the corn, but he returned presently ready to extend a warm welcome to anyone who showed an interest in the antiquities over which he stood in charge. Unlike so many priests in his position he took the proudest interest in his treasures. He led us into the sacristy, which communicated on either side with the church of S. Eusebio and his own house, respectively. Here, under the vaulted roof, were huge seventeenth-century cupboards of walnut and olive wood, which had been there, no doubt, ever since they were joined. These contained a great treasure of finely embroidered vestments, mostly of seventeenth-century work, which was still used in the church, each of which the good man brought out in turn and spread for our inspection upon a great table.

Never had I realized till that day how marvellously much old furniture gains from being in the

surroundings for which it was appropriately made. We all know the purists who regard it as something sinful to furnish a Kensington flat with Welsh dressers and Cromwellian chairs; we know, too, the answers—namely, that having such furniture it is a pity not to use and enjoy it as best one can. But upon my soul (having been a sinner for many years in some such regard as that) I repented when I saw these plain, whitewashed rooms, the tall old windows, the groined ceilings, the stone floors, the purple shadows, and the sunlight streaming down upon the old chests and settles. And another great point: there was nothing *unnecessary* in the whole place, nothing that was not used almost every day for some ordinary purpose.

Later the *parocco* took us along the pathway for a few hundred yards out of the tiny village to see another of his churches, that of the Madonna di Loreto. It was at that time falling into decay owing to lack of funds, which was a thousand pities, for this little octagonal church is a gem of early Renaissance work, and it is unique. Since then, I am glad to say, it has been partially repaired. Having five little turrets, it is locally known as the Cinque Torre.

Following the *parocco's* directions, we afterwards went down the hillside into the western valley to another ancient church which he served, dedicated to S. Sebastiano. This, like the others, had little of interest within; though outside its perfect propor-

tions, in conjunction with two huge cypresses which grow before its door, made a picture not easily forgotten.

It is a simple, austere life people live in that neighbourhood, but, without wishing to be romantic in an absurd degree, there definitely are compensations for poverty among olives and oranges, and wide views of distant mountains and the sea, and many months of unclouded sunshine. Heat, silence save for an occasional barking dog and the buzz of a myriad insects, the well-fed laziness of early afternoon, the surrounding arms, as you might say, of peace and friendliness, prospects to left and right of unrivalled loveliness, the middle distance seeming verily to tremble in the heat, and lastly an ardent thirst soon to be quenched at an ice-cold wayside spring—are not these things worth walking very far to know?

CHAPTER XV

FROM FINAL MARINA TO NOLI

"DOMENICA DEL CORRIERE"—THE IDEAL HOUSE—IDLE DREAMS—SEA-URCHINS—FRESH SARDINES—SAN PARAGORIO.

THE next morning we left Final Marina, and, passing along the sea-front, looked up to where, built on a rock, stands the old local prison. It is a picturesque building, and grim only in the light of one's knowledge of its purpose, for in appearance it might well be a dilapidated fort or magazine. Giovanni and I looked at it with a peculiar interest aroused the previous night, when, after dinner, we had amused ourselves by looking through the back numbers of the *Domenica del Corriere.* This is the illustrated Sunday paper associated with the famous *Corriere della Sera,* and every week for very many years its front page has been occupied by an illustration in colour of some topical event of exciting, romantic, or patriotic interest, always from the hand of Signor Beltrame. The back page also has a similar picture, generally by another artist, but Signor Beltrame's work must have been a definite part of Italian social

history for the last thirty years or more. Wonderful man, he is never at a loss. The King opens a new hospital—the subject is appropriately notified by Beltrame in a dignified mood; the express dashes towards the level crossing where the small child is playing on the line—see the agony on the mother's face as she flings herself to the rescue. Week after week Beltrame has gone on, always adequate to innumerable occasions. True, that in describing some event that has taken place in London or Chicago he has used the topographical detail of Milan, and has provided the houses with typically Italian shutters, but there he has but followed the exalted precedent of the older artists of his race, whose Bethlehems were usually derived from the next village to their Tuscan or Umbrian homes. And here on one of those front pages of years ago we had found that Final Marina itself had gained the splendour of Beltrame's Sunday attention, for prisoners had thrillingly escaped from the local jug, letting themselves down over rocks higher and more terrible than the rocks of fact by means of knotted blankets.

"Still," said Giovanni, "they must have been pretty smart. I wonder if they got away." We are wondering still.

The little bay which encloses Final Marina and Final Pia is bounded on the east by a low promontory, through which the road passes in a short tunnel. Over this tunnel is the garden of a house from

whose front door you could drop a stone vertically into the sea. This house, or *castello,* as it is called, has perhaps the most ideal situation of any residence of man I have ever seen. It is approached by a gate on the seaward side of the road which leads to a narrow zigzag pathway, mostly stairs. It is quite small, but ancient and beautiful, built on four or five different levels, with a number of little terraces before its doors and windows, shaded by vines and old pine-trees. Perched on its roof is a tiny private chapel. The garden and land belonging to it stretch back over the tunnel and for some little way up the hillside, where they are bounded by an old mellow wall with a wrought-iron gate, which gives upon a narrow lane. Subsidiary to the main entrance, there is a second stairway, which leads down to the rocks and to a delicious place for private bathing.

In my wildest dreams I come into a fortune and buy this miniature *castello.* Room by room I furnish it appropriately; in moments of enthusiasm I smell the gardenias which I shall plant in great oil-jars upon the main terrace. The principal sitting-room shall be a dream of perfection—perfection, that is, for me; no slave am I to period fetish; it is not a museum that I would live in. I would not even be rigidly insistent upon all the details of that room being purely Italian in origin. I should not wonder, for example, if some good seventeenth-century English oak did not find a conspicuous usefulness there.

The chimney-piece, unless an old one is there already (for I do not know), should be a very simple and modest reproduction of old Italian—a plain stone hood resting on brackets above an open hearth. There, in the winter, should brightly burn huge roots of olive-trees. On either side there would be two comfortable but congruous armchairs. From the windows east and west, from the terrace in front of the main door, I should gaze to seaward, and clear days on the one side would show me the tongue of land on the outskirts of Albenga, on the other the clearest days would give me a hint of the promontory which hides the seaport of Genoa. Final Marina itself will look as though I could pitch a biscuit into its midst, and yet its busy-ness will be to me but a distant hum. What could one not make of life, or so it seems, with such a setting! There, with a sufficiency—if that is ever attainable—of good books, with exquisite weather, and old wine, what mellow philosophy might one not evolve? Each day would be an enthralling excitement to look forward to, each night a lingering peace. Exercise? From the back of my house there is all Italy to tramp over and home again. Sport? I take a boat and a line and go and catch red mullet, which is sport enough for me. Human commerce? I go down to the town and sit with its notabilities for a while, and drink with them at the *café*. Golf? I suppose there is a links within a hundred miles, but not near enough,

thank Heaven, to matter. Great noble dogs should lie asleep on the flower-scented pathway and beat heavily their tails at my approach; a cat with kittens (and I am bound to say this presents no difficulty) shall be specially imported from England to administer to their amusement. My trees and shrubs shall become a sanctuary for little birds, and at the wine-harvest my vats shall purr and bubble with fermenting riches. In the heat of afternoon I shall work in my garden in order to give the keenest limit of bodily delight to my ensuing plunge into the quiet sea.

. . . Dreams that are quite, quite idle, for a variety of reasons, chiefest among which is that the house in question is not, and never will be, for sale.

All along that coast are the ruins of old castles and watchtowers, built in the days when the marauding Saracens were a constant menace. Two or three miles farther on beyond the beautiful, wooded headland of Varigotti we came to the most perfect bathing-cove below the road and out of sight of it. We had started very early in the morning. It was a grilling day, and we were very dusty. We deduced the existence of this cove from the lie of the coast, and, scrambling down from the road to the foreshore, duly discovered it. Two high rocks were divided by a little strip of pebbly beach, but the pebbles were so small as to be no hardship to walk on. The water became deep immediately, and by swimming a little way one could easily scramble out on to

a jutting rock and find a good place from which to plunge in head first.

In passing, it is worth mention that discretion is due in putting foot or hand to ground among rocks in shallow water. Some parts of the coast, especially at Diano Marina, are infested with sea-urchins. One knows this, but somehow forgets it until next time. You put down a hand, or a foot, or a knee, in leaving the water, without looking first, and next moment you find your skin decorated very painfully with innumerable small spines, most of which have inconveniently broken off just beneath the surface of the skin. Even when they have entered laterally they are the very devil to remove, while if you put the sole of your foot squarely upon the back of a sea-urchin your homeward journey is going to be difficult. They are not poisonous to any harmful extent, so far as I can discover, as they are often alleged to be, but they are a great nuisance, and call for the prolonged and repeated applications of bread poultices.

There were, however, no sea- or other urchins at Varigotti, and, after a refreshing hour spent in or just out of the water, Giovanni and I dressed, hoisted our packs, and set out toward our immediate destination. This was the ancient town of Noli.

At one time this was a little republic in itself, and overlooked from the headland beyond it by an enormous castle, the extensive ruins of which still remain.

Photo G. L. Holdsworth

PERTI, NEAR FINAL BORGO

Photo E. N. I. T., London

NOLI

Facing the sea-front there are a number of very beautiful old houses, though of widely different architectural styles. From the middle of the little town rises a plain square tower of mellow red brick, while there is a long, colonnaded pavement with carved capitals, from which open most of the shops.

On our arrival at Noli we were pleasantly tired, extremely thirsty, and healthily hungry. The inhabitants are more active fishermen than at many places along the coast, and in the heat of midday the smell of the place was rather more redolent of Grimsby than I care about. But when we reached the Albergo d'Italia, though still upon the sea-front, the most virulently fishy neighbourhood had been passed by, and our nostrils were greeted instead by that far more appetizing scent which arises from fish that have been skilfully treated in a frying-pan.

In the event we were not destined to spend the night at Noli, but if ever I do so it will assuredly be at that particular inn. On the little terrace before it, shaded by brown canvas and guarded from the dust of the road by a phalanx of shrubs, we sat down at a neatly spread table. A pleasant girl brought us first some lemons with a glass implement to extract the juice, some glasses, sugar, ice and a couple of siphons. Ours was the kind of thirst, we mutually decided, which is best dealt with on those lines. We dealt with it. Then was put before us a large dish of steaming *risotto,* made with kidney and *fungi;*

this in due course disappeared, and was replaced by another dish on which were heaped, hot but dry, golden and crisp, those little fishes about whose precise identity there has, at one time or another, been such heated, and, I believe, even legal, discussion in England—namely, sardines. But fresh sardines, not putative pilchard-fry extracted with much thumb-cutting, curses, and stupidity out of a small, flat, expensive tin. Fresh sardines, caught that morning, across the way there, over in that there sea, and brought straight from net to basket, from basket to admirable cook at the Albergo d'Italia. Only one word adequately sums them up, a word of my childhood, but none the worse for that—scrumptious.

After lunch we inspected the church of S. Pietro in the middle of the town, where there is a carved bishop's throne and two stools, of very obvious antiquity, almost certainly late fifteenth-century work. I mention this particularly, because later we found the priest; a very old man, of the little outlying and much earlier church of S. Paragorio, and when I mentioned to him the woodwork of S. Pietro's he snorted with jealous contempt.

"All nineteenth century—every bit of it. It is without interest."

There we differed from him, though he is a very distinguished and learned old man. He was only standing up for his own church! But S. Paragorio,

though much restored, is certainly a little gem. It is built over a pagan temple, which now forms the crypt, and has a fine porch of black and white marble and beautiful arcading in stone all round the semi-circular apse, and along each side of the church just beneath the rich red tiles. Near the porch is a little tomb supported by very slender Lombardic columns. Inside, S. Paragorio has been reconstructed mainly from the original stones, and the old Roman temple beneath serves as a museum in which the old man has placed such pieces of pottery and carved stonework as he has found from time to time. All round the church he has made, dug, and tended with his own hands a really exquisite little garden. Before leaving the church the old man beckoned to us with a kind of sly importance, and brought us up to the high altar, where he pulled aside the altar-cloth to reveal a little hidden store of booklets. These were copies of a history of S. Paragorio which the old gentleman had himself compiled during the many years of his incumbency.

I am afraid that we did not then realize that this booklet is honourably included in the catalogue of the Department of Printed Books at the British Museum, that it is a work of profound scholarship, and that we ought to have been very proud indeed to meet the author.

CHAPTER XVI

FROM NOLI TO SANTA MARGHERITA

ALBISSOLA—MORE FOOD!—THE VILLA DELLA ROVERE —GARDENIAS—A GOOD LANDLORD—"PANETTONE" AT VARAZZE—A MEMORABLE MEAL AT ARENZANO—IMITATIONS—TWO DAYS IN GENOA.

EASTWARD from Noli the next place of interest is Spotorno, a small village in very picturesque surroundings, to which, however, are being added a number of good hotels. Spotorno is blossoming in the commercial sense, and as I write I observe that it is even advertising itself in the *Morning Post*. On this occasion, however, Giovanni and I were in one of our lazy moods, and it was from the dusty but comfortable seats of a motor-bus, running from Noli to Vado, that we inspected Spotorno. At Vado we left the bus and boarded a local tram which runs into Savona.

To paraphrase Mr. Max Beerbohm's famous description of Oxford as approached from the railway-station, Savona may well be called a bit of Newcastle through which Apollo had once passed. The old days of its paramount mercantile importance are gone, but it is, nevertheless, a seaport and market-

Photo E. N. I. T., London

SAVONA: THE PILOT'S TOWER

Photo E. N. I. T., London

COGOLETO

town of some little consequence. Its shops are good and cheap. Ladies travelling in Liguria whose wardrobes call for immediate replenishment will not find Savona inadequate to most of their needs. On another occasion I even found an agent for the particular typewriter that I was using who was able to repair it. The most cursory stroll both through main- and by-streets will discover for you many little gems of ancient craftsmanship—here a finely panelled door, there a superb carving in stone or marble, here again some noble ironwork, or a fountain ingeniously wrought in the sixteenth century. And down by the harbour there is the perennial romance of ships, especially of little sailing-ships, clustered beneath the fine old tower which rises from the water's edge. Near here I found a small tobacconist who, catering as he often must for British sailors, was able to sell me a tin of a commonplace, a popular and ordinary brand of hard tobacco which is the only one that I can really enjoy in a pipe.

That night we had planned to reach Albissola Capo, the marine portion of the town of that name, which is but two or three miles beyond Savona. But our laziness persisted, and again we succumbed to the convenience of the motor-bus, which was ready for us just at the moment that we were ready for it. The outskirts of Savona practically meet and intermingle with those of Albissola. Both places have been famous in the past, and the latter is still, for

their pottery, and Giovanni and I were destined in the course of the next day or two to see something of the work at Albissola, from the crushing and mixing of the putty-coloured clay to the adornment of cups and saucers with hand-painted designs. Replicas of old Savona ware are in great demand, and are made at Albissola in much the same way as of old. There are several *alberghi* and hotels, but we had been recommended by an Italian friend to Pescetto's. In appearance there is nothing remarkable about this establishment: there are a number of bedrooms, two of which were apportioned to us, in a tall house overlooking the really very beautiful old Villa Balbi, one of the residences of the family of that name. Then, just across the narrow lane, you enter the gateway of a walled courtyard, most of which is shaded by a roof of creepers, while on one side is a sitting-room and the big kitchen of the *albergo*. Tables are laid in summer-time in this courtyard. The place is not, judged by the varied experiences of our tour, a particularly cheap one, but I think I can say without injustice to other establishments where the cooking has been good or very good, that here it was superb. Signor Pescetto himself is the officiating priest who observes a close ritual in the administration of his tasks. He is in the tradition of great landlords. Before every meal he invites you to inspect the uncooked food, and to say precisely what you would like, and how you would like it. From a dish

of assorted fish that have just been brought in from the sea he will point out which are succulent, which he, if he were you, would avoid; which should be fried, and why; which should be treated in some other way. The same with a great piece of meat which, raw, looks even less inviting in the dubious joints of the Continent than it does in England. Indeed, you seldom see meat in recognizable joints at all. But Signor Pescetto inspires confidence. With the tip of his knife he indicates where the fillet is thickest and most juicy. "You shall have a piece from just there."

In the course of those two days Giovanni and I had wonderful meals, the outstanding delicacy being nothing less prosaic than potato-balls. But where trouble and understanding are added to art, prose is transcended. These little croquettes of mashed potato were in the first place the most inviting things of their kind to look at that I can remember. The surface of them was crisply and evenly fried a golden brown; there was a hint in them—no more—of egg and cheese. They were very wonderful. And for fruit a fine dish of wild mountain strawberries had been gathered, which for flavour if not for consistency are as good as any strawberries in existence. These little berries grow in great abundance in Italy, and are also cultivated. Very often they are sprinkled with a dash of Marsala. I find them preferable with plain sugar.

The following day, armed with a letter of introduction, we visited the Villa della Rovere, the seat of the Gavotti family, situated about a mile away on the outskirts of Abissola Superiore. It is a splendid old house with a magnificent garden, balustraded terraces, marble-encircled pools set about with statues, rather reminding one of a miniature Chatsworth. The front door of the house, however, opens on the village street, while the garden itself, stretching away beyond, is somewhat overlooked. The place is a National Monument, and cannot, therefore, fall into the hands of vandals. Here, again, are fine, bare rooms, with their sparse original furniture, a private chapel with a small seventeenth-century organ, and outside the main building a series of huge saloons decorated in the taste of Louis XV to represent the four seasons. These are full of exquisite craftsmanship, and no doubt to those, of whom I am not one, who can find contentment in the decoration of that period very beautiful; but after the severe simplicity of the big entrance-hall, with its sixteenth-century settles, they seemed a little fussy and restless to live in. Italians "will have their little joke," and the fresco painting of a housemaid shaking a duster out of a (false) top window of this ancient and otherwise dignified *palazzo* made me laugh even while I wanted to scream.

Returning from the dignified if decayed splendour of the Villa della Rovere, fortified by gardenias in

our buttonholes given us by its master, we wandered for a while over the flat stretch of country which is dotted here and there with other imposing old houses.

Gardenia buttonholes, besides being reminiscent of the sort of splendour which goes with fur-lined coats, make up for their (purely associated) vulgarity by their intense fragrance. They do more than that for me; they remind me of one of "Pitcher's" anecdotes occurring (I think) in *Houndsditch Day by Day,* in which a young Israelite tries to persuade his laundress to wash only the front and cuffs of his shirt so that he may save "twopence for a gardenia buttonhole."

They are lovely things, but, once worn, very short-lived.

That evening Signor Pescetto was in even more jovial a mood than normal. He jested with every one who sat at his tables in turn, paying quite as much attention to the ragged peasant family who had come down from the hills for a jolly day by the sea as to the latest arrivals in gorgeous apparel and an expensive car. I am not quite sure what the word "democracy" means, except in its purely pedantic sense, but have a vague idea that it means something extremely unpleasant. But if it means the sort of conduct displayed by this good landlord and that other at the Best Inn in the World then I am contented with democracy. With just as much ceremony did he display the uncooked food to the peas-

ants as to the rich folk. His duty as landlord and host would never allow him to imagine that there could be any difference in treatment. And to observe the procedure of such a man is particularly soothing to anyone who hates to see, as Giovanni and I do, wealth treated with consideration for its own sake.

The essential atmosphere of a place is extraordinarily hard to define. Albissola has several points of beauty, more of interest; the bathing, though not the best upon that coast, is pretty good; the inn and all that it connotes I have dealt with. It is fifty times more "interesting" than the immediate surroundings of the Best Inn in the World, and more convenient. But to me it was completely "unsympathetic"; it left me, as we say, cold. In despite of Signor Pescetto, his charming manners, his good-fellowship, and his cooking, I don't care two straws if I never see Albissola again. I have nothing against the place, and you, reader, may like it very much. I hope you will. But there it is; for a reason which I find it impossible to define Albissola does not suit me, and it was with real relief that I turned my back on it, and set out on a morning which threatened rain towards the east.

That day's walk provided me with a picture which I shall never forget. We had followed the road through a little cove and past a big bare building, the purpose of which was not immediately apparent, and had climbed the hill, and just before rounding the

headland stopped for a while and leaned upon the wall and looked down the cliff, and out over the glowering sea. Rain had not yet fallen, but heavy and evil clouds were massing in the south-west. And in the little cove below us there was a kind of vivid gloom. It was like twilight, yet with each smallest detail visible. Down from the big bare house at the head of the cove came trooping a number of oddly dressed women, mostly old. Their skirts were of a bluish-grey material, and all wore a shawl upon their shoulders, some of a bronze colour, some of a rich, dull red. These colours were somehow intensified against the yellow sand by that dangerous deceiving twilight. They were like people in a dream, there was an extraordinary air of unreality about them, as they huddled together, and separated, and gesticulated in a kind of impromptu drill. Not a sound came from them; we could see them moving their hands this way and that with a silence that was almost ghastly. And it was not for some moments that the simple explanation of their odd antics came to us. The house at the head of the cove was a home for deaf and dumb women.

Those clouds from the south-west came hurrying up the sky relentlessly, though we were fortunate in being able to reach the town of Varazze before the downpour. Any place seen for the first time in such circumstances suffers under a handicap in one's memory. There is much that is picturesque in Var-

azze; there are big hotels which are filled to overflowing with *bagnanti* in the holiday season; there are narrow, winding streets and many shops. For our part, when the rain came we dived down half a dozen steps from the pavement into a small *café,* where we took off our rucksacks and drank coffee. Amusing in retrospect, yet irritatingly true, it is how jestingly perverse are the small accidents of life. Neither of us was tired, neither of us wanted to rest, we were perfectly prepared to walk onwards for the rest of the day. But if we had done so we and our packs would have been soaked through, and we should have been extremely uncomfortable, and we could not be sure that at whatever place we came to at nightfall we could have got them dried. Ordinarily on a long march like that we were both of us only too glad to find a *café* to rest in. Such is the way of things.

The rain stopped after a little, and a new and unaccustomed craving overtook us. It was about the hour, ignored during our tour, but at home sacred to afternoon tea. We were suddenly filled mutually with a desire for something in the nature of cake. We left our luggage in the *café,* therefore, and went out into the town. Here in a little baker's shop, fragrant with the scent of new bread, we purchased a plain round cake known as *panettone.* The closest relation to it in England is what is known as plum bread. In Italy it is baked as a round, flattish

Photo E. N. I. T., London

RAPALLO: THE CASTLE

Photo E. N. I. T., London

loaf of various sizes from that of a penny bun to that of a bicycle wheel. In effect, *panettone* is a plain bun made with raisins, candied peel, and pine-kernels, which last, though almost tasteless, are pleasant to bite upon. Having devoured one of these between us, we returned to the *café* for our baggage and another drink, and then walked up to the station, which we reached just in time to avoid another tropical downpour, and took train to Cogoleto, the next station. Here the rain still persisted, and the outlook seemed hopeless. I had never seen a place that seemed less likely to offer reasonable accommodation to travellers. When you are wet you need, somehow, more comfortable quarters than when you are merely tired, if only you are tired enough. We enquired of the porter at the station where we could stay for the night. He pointed to a forbidding-looking little pothouse across the road. With all the misgivings in the world we went there; only to discover, as we had discovered before now, that the outward appearance of Italian inns is the most deceptive imaginable. We ought to have known; we ought to have been more trustful. We found a most agreeable young *padrona,* comfortable rooms, an excellent dinner, a sufficiency of good red wine to restore our confidence in fate and to remind us that when it is wet outside the inward man should be made to match.

I am told on excellent authority that Cogoleto is quite a good place to stay at if you can hire a villa

in the neighbourhood, and certainly behind it inland there is beautiful country which will repay exploration. But the rain spoilt it for us, and we left early the next morning, the weather having returned to its accustomed loveliness, and marched ahead. Thenceforward to Genoa the coast is certainly less beautiful. There are many big hotels scattered along the coast, most of which exist only for the bathing season, and are to be recommended for no other purpose.

At Arenzano, however, some consideration is being given to the possibility of a winter season. And in order to make the English visitor at home he may find in the station, as I did, the English railway-poster of the small girl and the engine-driver. In other respects, too, I should be rather inclined to describe Arenzano as a kind of Eastbourne-cum-Margate. It is full of big hotels and bathing establishments and expensive *cafés*. The country inland is beautiful, and the hills are clad with pines. By the time of our arrival there we were hungry, and we began casting an eye hither and thither for a likely place to feed at. Just outside the town we noticed a cottage beside the railway-line with a bush hanging above the door, which at the least meant that we could get wine there. We entered; we thought perhaps that we might be able to get a bit of sausage or cheese; we could but try. Within there was a long room divided into two by a bar; on one side of this

was the kitchen, on the other were well-scrubbed tables and benches, the tiled floor was sprinkled with sawdust. We asked if it would be possible to have a meal. A little wizened woman said that, certainly, dinner would be ready in half an hour. We left, therefore, our rucksacks behind us, and, crawling under a culvert beneath the railway at some little distance, we undressed on the pebbles and plunged into a strangely cold, tempestuous sea. It is amazing what a difference a day's rain will make to the temperature of the Mediterranean. But the dip was refreshing, and the prospect of food of whatever kind became more attractive than ever.

When we returned to the tiny inn we found one or two barefooted fishermen sitting there, drinking wine and waiting for their dinner. Presently there entered an elegant old lady in fine black lace, who said "Good morning" to the *padrona,* and sat down at one of the tables. The fishermen wished her a good appetite. It was quite evident from the matter-of-fact way in which she came in that she was in the habit of feeding here. This was "Italy all over." The place was humble and, though perfectly clean, quite rough. We sat down and asked the good man of the house, who was acting waiter, what he could give us, and he gave us a huge dish of steaming *past' asciuta,* and after that one of very small whitebait, beautifully fried. With this we drank a pint or so of white wine, new, but far rounder and better than

some we had recently drunk at a more pretentious hostelry. This was followed by a generous cup of first-rate black coffee, and a glass of the best cognac I have tasted in Italy—for all of which we paid something in the vicinity of tenpence a head.

From Arenzano we scrambled up the steep hillside to the summit of a grassy headland, where for a time we sat and looked, as it were, through a frame of pine-trees at the picture below. It was Sunday, and two or three cars were drawn up at the side of the road immediately beneath us, while their occupants were picnicking on the beach. Presently these were joined by another party from a small yacht, which we had seen some time before coming from the direction of Genoa. After a while they all began to dance, though how they managed to do so on the soft sand somewhat defeats me. I suppose that the sort of dancing current at the present time demands less urgently that swinging floor regarded as indispensable in my youth for the waltz or the polka. I don't know; they evidently enjoyed themselves very much, and it must have been good exercise at two o'clock of a blazing hot day.

Arenzano is the first seaside place not overcrowded by houses to the westward of Genoa. But one other rural scene returns to me just after we had come down from the headland. At a very small hamlet at the top of a little cove a *festa* was in progress, and all the boys and girls of the neighbourhood, to

Photo E. N. I. T., London

THE PORT OF GENOA

Photo Donald McLeish

GENOA: THE VIA XX SETTEMBRE

say nothing of their mammas, had gathered to make simple merriment. Music was supplied by a piano-organ, and at improvised stalls refreshments of the most innocent kind were being purveyed. One of these innocent refreshments indeed we sampled—the common or garden hazel-nuts (generally known in England as Barcelonas) which had been roasted in their shells. These we cracked with a stone on the top of the sea-wall near by, and found them most excellent.

Thenceforward we tramped along the Cornice road to Voltri. This is a manufacturing town which straggles along the rim of a wide bay, and is merely an offshoot of Genoa itself. The great steel-rolling works, a branch of which has been, as I have said, established at Oneglia, occupies most of the ground. On the outskirts of Voltri we boarded an electric tram, which was to take us into the middle of Genoa, a matter of some dozen kilometres, which, quite apart from any physical inclination, were most unsuitable to a walking-tour. On the way, however, at Pegli you pass the well-known Villa Pallavicini, with its marvellous gardens and trick fountains, which is open to the public, though private property. Every here and there you pass quite a number of fine old houses of varying architecture, which must have been built for, and are still occupied by, well-to-do citizens, who daily follow in the great seaport their mercantile avocations.

My reference to trick fountains needs a little explanation, which will carry you, if you care to pursue it, to the heart of the Italian character.

Parties of Genoese trippers and others are allowed to visit the Pallavicini gardens, though they must be "conducted," and paper-bags and orange-peel are ruthlessly proscribed. The grounds and gardens, laid out at vast expense in the forties of last century, are very extensive, and, apart from trees and flowers, form an agglomeration of the most abominable fakes in the history of Philistinism. Marble mushrooms gleam among the vivid grass, a false cavern has been built and adorned with stalactites filched from real caverns and cemented in place—most realistic. There is an imitation tomb of a general who never lived, who is supposed to have been slain at the storming of a castle whose only existence lies in spurious ruins.

Innocently you walk along a sequestered path between the flower-beds, and suddenly find yourself drenched with spray from a hidden fountain. You stoop to smell a rose, and the rose squirts a jet of water into your eye. Italians love this sort of thing, just as they adore the frescoed housemaid shaking her duster from the false window; just as in their long distant past they delighted in the false lace on the altar-rails at Final Borgo. (Indeed, the Italians were the first people to manufacture *faux antiques* for collectors, and, in order to demonstrate the age

of that art and the age, too, of the "collecting" spirit, it is worth remembering the story of Michelangelo, who is said to have first damaged and then buried a marble head that he had sculptured in order that its worn and stained appearance might enhance its price.)

I once expatiated to Giovanni on this sort of enormity, and mentioned a particularly vile instance in England, where, in some public gardens, a "rustic" bridge had been constructed of twisted boughs made of cement. "Don't forget," he said, "that in Italy you would have the same thing with the addition of a cement dog keeping guard." At the time I thought that this observation of Giovanni's was purely rhetorical; but some time later, sure enough, I found a small villa with "rustic" balustrades of cement on either side of the steps leading to the front door, and cement dogs seated on the tops of the pillars. One of these had his tongue hanging out.

At Genoa we spent two nights at a comfortable hotel in the middle of the town called the Croce di Malta. We wandered about rather like Zummerzetzhire yokels on their first visit to London, doing a little shopping, and garping wide-eyed at the sights.

The chief seaport of Italy is full of "sights" of the most impressive kind, and our scrutiny of them seemed to come very oddly in the middle of a walking-tour, which was for the most part undertaken as far as possible from bricks and mortar. A

couple of days in civilization made, however, a pleasant break. Genoa is by no means an inexpensive place, though, used with discretion, and taking advantage of recommendations from such people as the *padrone* of the Best Inn and a photographer of our acquaintance, it did not break us. Our principal reason for pausing there at all was in order to meet a friend on his way through from England, who was to catch a boat sailing for Port Said. This we did on our second evening, starting out early the next morning by train to Santa Margherita.

CHAPTER XVII

FROM SANTA MARGHERITA TO SAN FRUTTUOSO

POPULAR RESORTS—PORTOFINO—"NEBIOLO"—A DELIGHTFUL COVE—THE TOMBS OF THE DORIAS—MORE BATHING—BEETLE *versus* CENTIPEDE—THE OSTERIA UNICA—THE BATTLE OF THE PINK MUSLIN.

NOWADAYS Santa Margherita and Rapallo, the next station, join one another, and practically fill the Gulf of Tigulio. There are other parishes included along this stretch of coast, but in effect Santa Margherita and Rapallo fill up the whole of the big bay with its several little inlets. In the last few years these places have grown out of all recognition, and the hillsides above them, where, within living memory, stood a few scattered villages, and here and there a villa among its own olive-groves, are now whole colonies of houses for the well-to-do. The place, if for a moment we may regard it as a single town, is one of the most eminently civilized in Italy; but not that, not even the atmosphere of expense and fashion, can spoil it. Taking one thing with another, the Bay of Rapallo, if you look westward to Santa Margherita, is as lovely a sight as can anywhere be found. It is,

owing to some configuration of the hills, undeniably hotter than the Ponentine Riviera, and the sea is of an even more vivid blue. But the gem of all that coast is the little village of Portofino, which nestles round a landlocked harbour on the landward side of a small promontory of that name, which is the western limit of the bay. Thither we betook ourselves from the station of Santa Margherita in an antiquated horse-bus which rattles and sways for three miles along the most lovely stretch of road I have ever seen. There is no "discovery" to be made at Portofino; it has been a show-place for many years. Fine villas and trim gardens are perched here and there upon the flanks of the surrounding hills, and there is a general air of sober luxury and well-swept grace. But no more houses are to be built upon that exquisite promontory which the Italian Government has wisely decided, and in time, shall remain unspoiled. So now it will stay until that unimaginable catastrophe occurs which seismologists tell you will occur (within the next 50,000 years or so) whereby the whole of Liguria will suddenly slip off into the sea. In and out round little rocky headlands, through little green coves, the road runs to Portofino, now beneath towering rocks, now past steeply sloping hillsides covered with "umbrella" pines, now past a beautiful castle, and once, at the head of the tiny cove of Paraggi, a very pleasant little inn. Corner follows corner, and we grew impatient. Should

we never come to the journey's end? And then, as so often happens, and in other relations of life as well, we had driven into the village and had arrived when we least expected it. When I say driven into the village I should amend that by adding that one drives only to one end of it. There the road stops at the foot of the steps up to the old church. The approach to the quayside is made down two steeply inclined pathways. The tiny bay itself is shaped like a horseshoe, and, being deep, makes a small but safe harbour even for steam-yachts of a considerable size. Looking towards Rapallo, the hill rises sharply behind you at the narrowest part of the isthmus, and ends in an abrupt cliff. Southward the promontory broadens out, at first like the head of a spear, so that Portofino itself is built upon one side of a very narrow neck of land. It was not my first visit to Portofino, nor Giovanni's, but we were both acting the part of enthusiastic showman to our companion, and—to be honest—the enthusiasm which I hope is observable in my approach to Portofino is culled from other occasions, for we arrived in a downpour of rain, through which this extraordinarily beautiful place was hardly visible at all. Our friend's face was as long as the mackintosh he had thought it unnecessary to bring. We had persuaded him to curtail his leave in England by a day for this very end, from the outstretched arms of wife and family we had torn him, on the way to duty, for the

sake of unexampled pleasure. And then this. During our whole tour this was the fourth and last day upon which rain fell. But if we were disappointed on our arrival our annoyance was but short-lived. For before we had finished lunch the rain had stopped, and by the time we were ready to start out again the sun was shining at full blast.

There are several hotels in and about Portofino, one of them large and gorgeous, but in the lifetime of Signora Crovan (and may that be long!) the old Albergo Delfino is the place for me. This is a big old rambling house with a fine dining-room and a magnificent terrace leading off it where one dines, when fine, overlooking the quay from a good height. The entrance to the *albergo* is from a steep and narrow pathway at the back, along which at intervals sit women of the place making lace on pillows, and importuning the wayfarer to buy. The main part of the house has two or three bedrooms for visitors, but further and better accommodation is provided in a cottage which is used as an annex a few yards farther up the path. The Delfino lacked a bathroom when I was there last, but in all other respects it is thoroughly comfortable. (Go into the small outer dining-room and approach a gilt picture-frame let into the wall, which is glazed, and thus forms an interior window; stand on tiptoe—that is all that is necessary—and look through it, and you will know what I mean.)

At lunch the third member of our party, who had been up till now studiously polite about the attractions of the place, cheered up. The *risotto,* flavoured with a touch of saffron, such as they make it at the Delfino, would cheer up a teetotal publican. The *signora* produced too a bottle, in fact two bottles, of a Piemontese wine called *Nebiolo.* This is one of the sparkling wines from the neighbourhood of Asti, red, and more rich than the wine usually labelled Sparkling Asti. It is quite innocent, slightly sweet, and is more strongly effervescing than is champagne. You may drink it by the bucketful without being seriously sorry. Once again both the expert and the connoisseur are warned that this is not the type of wine to discuss in hushed voices, though in some parts of Italy, notably Tuscany, some rare and beautiful old wines are procurable. *Nebiolo* is just a jolly good drink, and I claim no more for it than precisely that.

The season when we arrived at Portofino happened to be a most propitious one, the bathing season in the first days of July had not begun, and we got the place entirely to ourselves. We had, therefore, the choice of rooms, and the whole attention of the *padrona.* From the terrace of the Delfino you can, if you are so minded, flick the cherry-stones from your table into the still, green water. Opposite rise the high old houses and the church, and above them, among the woods, are a number of picturesque

villas. Nearer at hand, to your left, is the *piazza* with a *café* or two overlooking it, and fishing-boats and gear drawn up upon the sloping stones. Behind the rambling hotel runs the steep, cobbled path which leads past several private houses and gardens and among trees to the lighthouse at the extreme end of the promontory. The walk only occupies a few minutes. Everything in Portofino is in miniature. And from the windows of the *albergo* you look out between two tiny headlands and over the masts of the small yachts that lie at anchor there across the blue sea to Chiavari and the mountains behind Sestri Levante.

Having explored the promontory itself, we set out to walk over the big hill to the northward, in order to visit the tiny fishing village of San Fruttuoso. It is a hard walk to the hilltop, but you are rewarded by an incomparable view. Into Santa Margherita it looks as though you could toss the proverbial biscuit. Rapallo is a cluster of pearls which divides a sea of lapis lazuli from hills of emerald-green. Over low-lying Chiavari there was a blue film of smoke, out of which rose the higher hills and headlands to the east. We turned away presently through the woods of "umbrella" pines, and were shortly making our way down the almost precipitous track which leads to the little haven.

San Fruttuoso can only be reached by this mule-track or by the sea. In calm weather a motor-boat

from Portofino will whisk you round the promontory to the inlet in rather over half an hour. In rough weather it is not a trip to be recommended, even if you could find a boatman willing to undertake it, which is doubtful.

(In parenthesis, the motor-boats most in use along the whole Ligurian coast are of the simplest convertible kind. Into a bracket fixed to the stern of an ordinary small craft you drop your portable engine. These differ in size, but a number of them *are* portable by a strong man.)

The walk takes a couple of hours' hard going, which is well repaid. San Fruttuoso consists of a small inn—the Osteria Unica—a church, part of which was destroyed in a landslide a few years ago, four or five fishermen's houses, and a fine, high, medieval tower, once a stronghold of the Dorias, the Genoese family whose exploits fill Italian history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This tower is now used as a dwelling-house by the village schoolmistress, who, at the time of my visit, had about three pupils to deal with. Near the back of the inn are many of the tombs of the Dorias, in a dark crypt, which one has to inspect with the aid of candles; and close by are two storeys of cloisters round about a miniature courtyard, with early Romanesque columns, the capital of each being differently carved, through which the sunlight slants down upon the picturesque wrack of the fishermen's trade—old

lobster-pots, nets, and coils of rope. The windows and terrace of the ancient rambling inn exactly face the outlet of the miniature cove. This is very narrow, and great cliffs, topped by overhanging pines, rise up around it. The inn itself is divided from the water by only a narrow strip of pebbly beach. It is built upon arches; and from the terrace shaded by vines, where we sat and drank coffee, we looked straight into the boats which had been drawn up on the shingle. We had intended to go back to Portofino by boat, but the third member of the party, who was to return to Genoa on the following morning, discovered, while undressing to bathe, that he had dropped his passport out of his pocket somewhere on the mountain path. So, as passports are serious affairs, we had to go back the way we came in order to look for it. Since, however, nothing was to be gained by flurry and panic, we enjoyed a leisurely bathe, in the most perfect conditions conceivable. If you prefer to go into the water feet first you can walk delicately over the pebbles immediately fronting the inn. If you prefer to take a header you follow the track that has been made with cemented rubble over the rocks to some rough steps a few yards away, on which it is customary to land from a boat. Thence you may dive straight down into the heart of an emerald. The water is very deep, but exquisitely clear. You can swim right across the cove at this point in five or six

Photo G. L. Holdsworth

PORTOFINO: THE HARBOUR

Photo K. M. Yeatman

SAN FRUTTUOSO

minutes. Seriously, it is worth crossing Europe for just one dip into the sea at San Fruttuoso.

On our way back we were lucky enough to find the passport in a tuft of grass by the wayside. Near there we witnessed a battle royal between a beetle and a centipede. For quite two minutes the brutes twisted and struggled with—particularly on the centipede's part—a devilish fury, which I supposed must end in the demise of one of them. Not so, however. After a time they abruptly stopped fighting, and each went his way. Not worth the candle, they thought, I take it. (If, indeed, anybody burns a candle when centipedes lie in state.) I wished I had brought a camera with me. I had left it behind.

We spent that night at the Delfino, and after darkness fell were entertained by the fireworks which were being used to celebrate some occasion in the hills above Rapallo. Italians are extremely fond of pyrotechnic displays, and from a great way off the rockets which fell in golden rain against the blue-black velvety darkness were certainly beautiful.

The following morning Giovanni and I saw our man on to the Santa Margherita bus, and ourselves turned up the hill again and made for San Fruttuoso. One glimpse of such a place was not enough. We must taste the full flavour of it, and that could only be done by spending a night there. Our sleeping-quarters were in a little cottage, whitewashed and

spotless, which stood just below the terrace of the inn. Meals, of course, were brought out on to the terrace itself.

The name of the *padrone* is Bozzo. He is an enormously stout man, with a magnificent head and many imposing chins. He and his folk before him have been in this place, in this very house, he will tell you, father and son, for four hundred and fifty years. In the evening he would come and lean upon the rails of the terrace smoking his fearfully pungent *toscano,* and ask us if we were comfortable and happy. His wife is a little, smiling, delicate woman, who looks as though she were terribly afraid of the old man. I rather think that, not for the first time, "looks" are apt to lead one astray. I conjecture that Signora Bozzo rules that household with a rod of iron, but at the end of the rod there is a frying-pan, heaped on the occasion when I first inspected it with a goodly display of red mullet.

Anyone desiring to reach the mule-track up the mountain-side from the narrow beach must pass through the kitchen of the inn. So it was that I sometimes saw our host sitting in stolid contentment before a heaped plate. Invariably he ate his fruit at the end of a meal, leaning out of the window, reflectively spitting cherry-stones into a boat drawn up below it. But when that little, pale, delicate woman called him he would rise, as you would expect a poached egg to rise, if it could, from its circum-

ambient toast, slowly and wobblingly, and, having risen, waddle off to her with surprising alertness.

The son of the house is a huge, athletic fellow, with bare, copper-coloured shoulders and the merriest grin on that side of Genoa. He has a small motor-boat, in which he rattles away round the headland, sometimes to Portofino, but more generally to the town of Camogli, which lies at the foot of steep hills on the Genoa side, for supplies. Camogli is a fishing town entirely inhabited by seafaring men. Having on one occasion travelled from Paris to London with a crowd of Italian sailors on their way to join a ship at Liverpool, I discovered that every one of them came from Camogli.

San Fruttuoso is as peaceful a spot as I have ever seen, and in its miniature way as beautiful. But it has, to be strictly honest, one considerable drawback in the summer. It is infested by mosquitoes. Giovanni is proof against the pests, and never uses a curtain, as many Italians do, in the height of summer. I am not so fortunate. And before turning in I asked Signora Bozzo whether she could provide me with a net. No, but there was no need for it. Not a single mosquito had ever been seen in San Fruttuoso. But my suspicions were borne out by horrid experience. The joyous voices of the little brutes were audible in the room before I'd been in bed five minutes; and I had scratched myself sore before morning. The next night the *padrona* found me an odd

piece of pink muslin, which I draped (no doubt very artistically) over my head. It certainly helped a bit in the early part of the night, but before morning I had an evil dream and desperately fought therein with vague but encircling enemies. And when I woke up the piece of pink muslin had been badly beaten.

CHAPTER XVIII

FROM SAN FRUTTUOSO TO LEVANTO

"CHIANTI-CUP"—TO MONT' ALLEGRO—A BUS-RIDE TO CABANNE—WINE AND WATER AT SOPRA LA CROCE—SESTRI LEVANTE—MORE MOSQUITOES—MORE SEA-URCHINS.

We rose early after our second night at San Fruttuoso, and returned to Portofino by a shorter but much more arduous route than before. The rain had refreshed all green things, and had made distant scenes more vivid in colour. By the time we had reached Portofino again we were both very hot, and before indulging our laboriously acquired thirst we had a dip from the little mole which runs out into the harbour from below the Delfino. After this we repaired to the terrace to wait for our luncheon, and while waiting to enjoy a leisurely drink. I think this was the first occasion on which I tried that innocent but refreshing mixture of red wine and seltzer. To use good claret in such a conjunction would be manifestly sinful, but a new and pleasant Chianti, half and half with ice-cold soda-water, is one of the most thirst-quenching drinks I know. Alternatively, you may use what the Italians call *gazoze*—the sweet,

aërated drink contained in a glass bottle, stoppered with a glass ball, which you press down with your thumb or with a wooden instrument shaped like a mushroom, and which in English railway refreshment-rooms is called gingerbeer or lemonade according to which of these two you have asked for. And this leads me to a receipt I have evolved for a cup which in both senses of the phrase seems to go down very well. Naturally, with the resources of a private house and garden at one's disposal, it can be made the more readily.

For two people, then, pour into a large jug about two pints of good red wine; add to this two to three inches of cucumber cut in slices, a peach washed and cut up, but not skinned, and a sprig of borage; add the juice of a lemon, a large wine-glass of Italian vermouth, and a not too small one of cognac. Besides the lemon-juice it is a good plan to take the lemon-peel and boil it in a small saucepan in a little water—rather less than half a pint. This should be allowed to boil away until a strong essence only remains. Add some of this to your drink. Lastly, only just before using, pour in a pint or rather more of iced soda-water or *gazoze*. You will have added sugar to taste earlier in the proceedings, but remember that if *gazoze* is used you will not want so much of it. A varying subtlety is arrived at by the use of French vermouth instead of, or added to, the Italian.

Give me an Italian summer day, a recent return

from bathing, the near prospect of lunch, an amusing book, a deck-chair half in and half out of the sun, and a pint of that cup in a tankard, and it will take a good deal to ruffle me. Tankards, you say? Assuredly. At Oneglia not long ago I bought some big glass ones with handles, which were just the very thing for a drink of that kind—in a country which has almost forgotten the use of pewter, which I grant you is better.

After lunch we set out on foot to Santa Margherita, thence taking a motor-bus to Rapallo.

As already indicated, Rapallo has all the resources of civilization, and at all seasons of the year maintains an air of well-brushed gaiety. In and about the town are many beautiful houses and gardens, there are several first-class hotels and many more modest ones. There are frequent regattas, concerts, and dances, and in Mid-Lent a battle of flowers. There are first-rate tennis-courts, and an English library.

It was not our purpose to stay in Rapallo on this occasion, and after visiting some friends we pushed on up the steep hill to Mont' Allegro. This little place consists of a church, hotel, and a house or two on the mountain-top immediately overlooking Rapallo. There is no road, only a mule-track, and for visitors with luggage the landlord of the *albergo,* who by the way speaks excellent English, sends down a pack-mule. It is an arduous climb, but by this time we were in hard condition, and covered the distance

without turning more than a few proverbial hairs. For those interested, it should be noted that the *padrone* of the *albergo* very justly prides himself upon the excellence of his tea. He also provides a very good dinner, and every modern comfort that the English-speaking world requires. It is indeed an ideal place to stay at in the summer, being nearly 2000 feet above sea-level, and commanding wide and exquisite views.

Inland from Mont' Allegro there are a succession of steep mountains and valleys which would obviously repay exploration. We, however, had to press onwards to the east, and we followed the ridge of the hill in that direction early the next morning, our intention being to reach Chiavari from the landward side before lunch. In the event we got lost, and did not, therefore, arrive in the town till the middle of the afternoon. For a mile or two from Mont' Allegro the path is level, and for most of the way is open to a wide view of the Bay of Rapallo. After a while, however, it dips down the eastward side of the ridge among delightful woods, so that for long stretches at a time we walked in shade. During that morning we passed through but one tiny hamlet nestling on the hillside, and thereafter descended rapidly to the valley, but reaching a point some way north of our correct route. But there again, what does a small misadventure of that sort matter when you are on foot, when all your worldly goods are on your back,

Photo E. N. I. T., London

CHIAVARI

Photo E. N. I. T., London

LEVANTO

and when to-morrow will do just as well as yesterday or to-day? By the time that we were really seriously hungry we found a tiny wayside inn where we could buy a few slices of sausage and an onion to eat with the bread we had brought with us, and some wine to drink. The trouble at this inn was an unusual one. The *padrona* was out, and had locked the place up. A small child volunteered to hunt for her. Another small child hunted in another direction, and in the course of half an hour or more the lady was discovered and brought back.

Chiavari, where we arrived at about half-past three, is a flat-lying town of some mercantile importance, with plenty of good shops, but without much other interest for the tourist. Most of the shops stand back under a covered way supported by old stone pillars with carved capitals.

Our intention was to spend the night far up-country at a remote village called Cabanne. During most of the tour so far, though we had seen much wild country, especially in the mountains, we had never seemed very far from man and his handiwork. Giovanni suggested that the present expedition would show me something quite unlike any scenes through which we had passed. We therefore boarded a motor-bus that afternoon which runs to Cabanne by way of Borzonasca and covers the distance of thirty-seven kilometres, rising about 3000 feet above sea-level. The road, after passing thickly

wooded hills and through many pretty villages, emerges at last on to steep grassy slopes, and rises in prodigious zigzags to the mountain-top at the head of a big valley. Thence, just when you expect the road to sink again to some farther valley beyond, you find that it goes forward on the level of a great plateau. Here are vast fields and a well-farmed country, with a number of fine cattle browsing in lovely pastures which are apt to remind you, both in climate and scenery, now and again of some of the less inhabited parts of England.

The bus-ride itself was memorable. The vehicle was intended to carry thirty passengers; during the greater part of the way to Borzonasca it did, in fact, carry fifty-four. An old lady is plodding along the road from market with a heavy basket over her arm and a sack of vegetables, maybe. Comes along that road a roaring bus with a kind-hearted driver (with more than half an eye to the main chance). How can he let the old lady pursue that long and weary journey on foot? There are no more buses that night; he pulls up. The old lady, panting, puts a foot on the step and thrusts forward the basket to the first person who will take it from her—very often me, for I had an outside seat. A little farther on there was a party consisting of father, two daughters and a son. The father was very like Garibaldi; one of the daughters was quite fair, and looked British to the backbone. Later on we were

joined by a farm-lout, whose face and head were the exact counterpart of those belonging to a Roman Emperor of the decadence; and so it went on. It was a hot and by no means comfortable journey. What with pressure from the right as Giovanni squeezed tighter and tighter against me, and me against the side of the bus; what with Garibaldi, whose knees made mine immovable, and the Roman Emperor, who placed a large, hard parcel across them (asking permission with the sweetest smile); what with the many ruts and potholes in the road, over which the overloaded bus bumped and jerked and swayed; what with the closed glass front behind the driver's seat, which held back a through draught on that hot evening; what with the younger members of the party, who sang and fidgeted, and the older ones, who sweated and grinned, we were extremely glad when Borzonasca was reached and most of the passengers were shed. One thing, however; I never heard a cross word or saw an ill-tempered glance throughout that very trying journey.

At night, after the hot and sheltered coast, the plateau on which Cabanne stands is rather cold; and I was glad to put on the tweed jacket which had been rolled up for some time on the top of my rucksack. The inn at Cabanne, the Antica Trattoria della Cristina, we found rough, but adequate. The food, as usual, was excellent. Our joint bill for dinner, bed,

and early morning coffee amounted to twenty-two lire.

There are some excellent trout-streams in this neighbourhood. The bus went no farther than Cabanne, but mules can be hired by anglers and others who wish to go on to Rezoalio. Of the few passengers who remained in the bus as far as our destination was a woman with two children, who brought also an enormous dress-basket which had been placed on the roof of the bus, and was of about the dimensions of a small Methodist chapel. On arrival at Cabanne this good soul was met by her spouse or her brother with three mules; one was saddled, one carried panniers, and on to the third was strapped the basket. It was not, as a matter of fact, very heavy, judging from the ease with which the man hoisted it into position, but the sight of it perched on and almost eclipsing the mule would have caused the members of the R.S.P.C.A. to scream with indignation. The panniers were deep so that the children were almost lost to sight, and the mule with the side-saddle was a very small animal, so that the bountiful proportions of its rider loomed somewhat ridiculously as she headed the procession out of the village, with the elderly spouse (or brother) trudging beside her with a stick.

The following morning we set off early to walk the first part of the return journey, in order to see more leisurely the country through which we had

passed the previous evening. Much as I love the heat down on the coast, especially when opportunities for bathing are frequent, the exquisite air in these highlands was extraordinarily refreshing, as were the complete change of scenery, the presence of birds, which seldom get a chance of flourishing near the coast, and the extreme quietude. We walked on until we were overtaken by the bus on its return journey, and mounting it we proceeded at a good pace down the hills again to Borzonasca. The journey is well worth undertaking for the sake of the scenery, especially on the return, when we were in no wise crowded, and could stretch ourselves in comfort.

Borzonasca is a merry, friendly little town without anything that calls for special comment. Giovanni and I left our rucksacks at the principal *café*, and set out on foot up a narrow valley to the north-east which leads to the village of Sopra la Croce. This place is locally famous for its mineral spring. It has also, which was of greater interest to us, after a long, hot climb, a spring of ice-cold but ordinary water. The walk up reminded me in a way of the wooded valleys of Derbyshire or North Wales, though everything was on a larger scale. On either side the hills rose steeply up, covered with chestnut-woods, while here and there was an outcrop of grey, jagged rock, sharp-pointed like the teeth of a colossal giant. Down below the path the stream tumbled over rocks, past little lawns of short, bright grass,

while innumerable ferns grew among the boulders on either side. It was a delicious morning, hot but fresh, and the whole of the valley seemed to be subtly scented with wild flowers. Rising up steeply beyond Sopra la Croce is a considerable peak called, as indeed many hills in Liguria are called, Monte Penna. There is an excellent inn at the entrance to the village, with an enormous *sala da pranzo,* in which we sat down alone. It would almost have taken the guests at a Guildhall banquet.

Sopra la Croce is much frequented by Italians from the coast, who go up for a few days' outing. We happened, however, to have struck a lucky—or was it an unlucky?—day. The landlord waited on us himself, and produced an excellent meal, with which we consumed a litre of red wine each. Oh, how good-tempered we were on the return journey! For one thing it was downhill, for another the fragrance of the woods seemed intensified, the beauties of the valley more plain. Once Giovanni darted ahead round a corner and hid behind a rock, so that the next moment I passed him without knowing it, and went halloing down the track, wondering how he could have disappeared. Everything was lovely, anyhow, but more lovely because of that superb bottle of wine. The name of it escapes me, but even if it did not it would be of little use, these wines vary so enormously from year to year. The vineyard that produced in 1919 wines of the vilest description, in

1921 offered nectar to the gods. It is a matter of chance. But you will be very unlucky if even in one place, working conscientiously through the wine-list (if any), you do not discover something which you are content to abide by.

On our hot return to Borzonasca, whither we had hurried with a view to catching a bus which would take us speedily back to Chiavari, we discovered that there was no bus running until the evening. It had been withdrawn from the usual service (very properly, I have no doubt) in order to convey a number of children to a *festa* some distance away in the hills. Fortunately, however, in summer and in Italy the business of killing time on such an occasion—so arduous, so boring, and so annoying in England—is quite simple. We just retired into an adjacent wood, found a pleasantly shaded spot, lay down, and slept.

We did not, therefore, reach Sestri Levante from Chiavari until after dark; and this was annoying because the place was very crowded, the inn to which we had been recommended was full, as were two or three others at which we made enquiries. An unfriendly place it seemed to us. At half a dozen other inns along the road we had come I am sure they would have taken us in somehow, while at the Best Inn in the World, the *padrone* and his wife would probably have turned out of their own room and slept, if necessary, on the kitchen floor. For good reasons, one of them altruistic, I should hate to turn

any landlord out of his room in my favour, but Sestri struck me at all events as wrong, somehow; the place had filled up with *bagnanti*, who strutted about in flaming pyjamas, and the two dusty travellers were not wanted.

In the end we found a couple of rooms at a lodging-house, where rooms without meals were to be hired, and we went and fed at the station buffet. The rooms were clean, but that night was made hideous by innumerable mosquitoes, who are curiously local in their activities, for at Levanto, farther down the coast, which we reached the next day, there were none at all.

Feeding at the station buffet makes you think, reader—doesn't it?—of ham sandwiches, of sausage rolls, and of penny buns. The old jests regarding the staleness of these commodities in English refreshment-rooms are now out of date, for I must own that whenever I have been called upon in recent years to devour any of them they have been fresh. But the station buffet at Sestri Levante, and a good many other places that I can think of in Italy, had tables laid beneath a vine-clad arbour, where you could sit down in comfort and have a proper meal brought to you. These station restaurants vary, of course, but even at quite small places, such as in England would not be provided with the meanest bar, you can sit down, if you have the time, to hot food; while at the big places, like Genoa and Turin, the station restau-

rants are justly famous for rare cooking and enormous variety.

Sestri Levante is a very picturesque town built largely on a narrow isthmus and its adjoining promontory, just as Portofino is; but it is much larger than and not nearly so beautiful as Portofino, nor is it wooded in the same way.

The Cornice road leaves the sea at Sestri Levante, curves inland, and passes down to Spezia. In the course of this curve it rises to about 2000 feet at the Baracca Pass, whence (though on another occasion) we were able to get one of the most impressive views I have ever beheld. In the dawn the Carrara Mountains beyond Spezia rise in savage wildness, their summits touched with rose, while beneath are vast chasms of violet shade. The visible distances are immense, while to the westward you can see the hills at the back of Genoa, and on clear days the coast-line to Savona and beyond. In the old coaching-days men were stationed in rough weather at either end of the more exposed part of this road to stop the coaches until the weather had moderated, for not once or twice had coaches and their four horses been literally blown from the road. Whether, therefore, from Sestri Levante or from Levanto an expedition to the Baracca is certainly called for; the place itself is arid and bleak, but the approach, especially from Levanto, is beautiful. The *padrona* of the little *osteria* at the pass still uses the most primitive form

of lamp, with a wick floating in a little basin of oil.

Having spent a disturbed night owing to mosquito bites, I determined to make quicker progress away from Sestri Levante than was possible on foot, and, Giovanni being good-tempered about it (being impervious to mosquitoes he had reason to be), we took the train to Bonassola, five stations away, and about half an hour's journey. The intervening distance is sprinkled with admirable beaches and little coves for bathing, and there are a couple of ruined castles at Moneglia and Deiva respectively. So has Bonassola, where we left the train. This is quite a little place, but shares with the rest of the coast the summer season, and there were a certain number of people bathing from the most conspicuous stretch of beach. We, however, walked to the end of a tiny bay, where we found an unfrequented cove. Here the bathing was delicious, but less pleasant was the sea-urchin who had attached himself under water to a rock which I seized hold of in order to climb out and dive from. The little beast left half a dozen spines or more deeply embedded in my finger, and it was several days before I could get rid of them. After bathing we visited a small general shop and bought food for lunch, and with this bestowed in our pockets we set off up a steep hill towards Levanto, about three miles distant. Near the hilltop we sat down beside the path to feed, and after a leisurely progress finally reached Levanto at about three o'clock.

CHAPTER XIX

AROUND LEVANTO AND SPEZIA

A CURE FOR RHEUMATISM—PORTO VENERE—THE DIRTIEST VILLAGE IN THE WORLD—CREDULITY AT MONTEROSSO—THE STORY OF UNWORTHY VITTORIA—HOW TO MAKE "TAGLIATELLI"—WELCOME HOME.

In a quiet way Levanto is one of the best places in Liguria for English and American visitors. People who go there go there again and yet again. There are six or seven good hotels, some of which have hard tennis-courts. The place is unpretentious and unspoiled, and it is an admirable centre for excursions. It is sheltered, and has a wide sandy beach; much of the old town remains—a medieval castle, part of the walls, and a fine water-gate. In the parish church of S. Andrea is a relic of peculiar interest to English people, a silver-gilt chalice presented by Henry VIII to one of the da Passanos, whose seat was here.

We did not stay at an hotel, as we had already planned to lodge in a private house, belonging to the former cook of a friend, whose husband, a master-builder, had recently completed it—a prim, square box of a villa with a little bit of garden, its upper

floor let off as a complete flat to some *bagnanti*. Nothing much to look at, but exquisitely clean and neat. I said cook—what a cook!

We spent the rest of that day exploring, but the next morning we had a long, delicious bathe, and afterwards, urged by Giovanni, I buried myself in hot sand, and so remained for an hour or so. This I did for the four days that we stayed there, the second and third of them being fraught with considerable misery for me. Every atom of latent rheumatism in me (my physiology may be inaccurate, but my meaning clear) gathered itself together, as it were, and came out like an evil spirit. I could hardly move, and the pain was intense; but on the fourth day I was right again, and if I had been able to prolong the cure for ten days or so I have no doubt that I should have been much better for it. As it was, I never felt another twinge of rheumatism again that year. If visitors, especially rheumatic ones, would only get it out of their heads that the Italian Riviera is too hot in summer, they would benefit greatly.

On the day before our last at Levanto we took train into Spezia, which from a naval point of view may be called the Italian Portsmouth, and thence an excursion steamer across the bay to Porto Venere. This little old town is built upon a narrow isthmus opposite to a much fortified island. At the end of the promontory is a ruined church entirely built of black and white marble, the zebra-like effect of

Photo E. N. I. T., London

PORTO VENERE

Photo E. N. I. T., London

FINALBORGO WITH CASTLE GAVONE

which, in despite of the strong contrast, is very pleasing. From this church you can look out over the cliffs to the open sea on the west side and the Bay of Spezia on the other. Near by is a tablet engraved both in Italian and English to the memory of Byron, explaining how that "daring swimmer braved the Ligurian waves" on one occasion, and swam across the bay to Lerici, where still stands the house in which Shelley had an apartment at the time of his death. Here at Porto Venere, as in so many Italian coast-towns, the houses are extremely tall by the quayside, but, being built against almost sheer rock, the pathway at the back gives upon their upper floors. The view across the bay is wonderful. Here you will see fishing-boats with orange-coloured lateen sails, which in the setting sun take on a brilliance that almost makes your eyes ache. But first and last you turn to the snowy peaks of the Carrara Mountains, which rise above the coast-hills in the south-east. Every variety of shipping is to be seen in the bay—destroyers, tramp steamers, big and little sailing-vessels, some of which with their curious rig make you think for the moment that you are farther east than you really are.

The principal church now in use at Porto Venere is that of S. Lorenzo, which is chiefly remarkable for its magnificently carved choir-stalls.

On the return journey that evening we left the train at Vernazza, which Giovanni assured me was

worth a visit, if only because it was the dirtiest village in the world. I think it was; I am not sure, moreover, that it was not, correspondingly and naturally, the smelliest also. But it is extraordinarily picturesque; the houses are nearly all old, and there is a small, ruined castle perched on the headland opposite the station. (The station itself is odd, consisting of a mere glimpse of line a few yards long, between two tunnels.) Vernazza is one of the five villages known as the Cinque Terre. All the best wine in the neighbourhood is grown in one or other of these parishes, and each of them is well worth a visit for antiquarian reasons. So far they are hardly known at all by the outside world, and can only be approached from the land by mule-track.

A story is told in the neighbourhood of the people of Monterosso, which is next to Levanto, who were dissatisfied with the position of their church. The people of another village jeered at them, but pointed out that the church could be brought round to the right aspect if, during a moonless night, they tied ropes about it and pulled. Accordingly all the men of Monterosso turned out one dark night, fastened a very long rope round their little church and pulled. The rope was a woollen one, and they pulled and pulled and the rope stretched so that dawn found them a long way away—a mile or more, so the story goes, but when they went back to the church they

found it, oddly enough, in its original position. "Ah," said their neighbours, "you pulled too hard. You pulled the church right round and back again."

Dismal sounds were heard one night by the water-gate at Levanto, and the worthies of the place decided that a lost spirit wandered abroad there, and the church-bells were rung in order to lay the ghost. The ghost, however, refused to be laid, and after a time the simple truth dawned upon those worthies, and ever since the stream has been called the Cantarana, "the Singing Frog."

Mine host at Levanto told me another story which he swore was true. A woman of the place, named Vittoria, was in the habit of saying her prayers in one of the churches late in the evening, at an hour when the sacristan was used to lock up and go home. This annoyed the good man not a little. Night after night he had to wait while Vittoria knelt there, when, as he put it, she could have said her prayers just as well at an hour more convenient to him. He devised a plan. Creeping up to a gallery overlooking the place where Vittoria was accustomed to kneel, he lowered a large basket on a stout rope, and, hiding himself, intoned the words, "*O Vittoria mont' in corba!*" ("Come up in the basket, and it will take you to glory!"). But Vittoria beat her breast and cried out that she was not worthy. The voice called again to obey the heavenly summons, and again Vittoria

weepingly declared that she was not fit. At the third call, however, she got into the basket, which was immediately hauled up for three or four feet, and then suddenly released. After this Vittoria decided that, worthy or not, she would come to church at a different hour.

While the good man entertained us with stories of this nature his wife busied herself in her spotless kitchen contriving marvellous dishes for our more material enlightenment. She it was who showed me how *tagliatelli* are made. These constitute a form of *pasta* which can be bought in the market, but are better manufactured in a private kitchen. You take flour and pile it on a large table kept exclusively for the purpose. You then make a hole in the flour and break an egg into it, and work it with your fingers, aided by a little water, until it is as smooth as silk. The paste is then rolled out with a three-foot rolling-pin until it is so thin that you can see the grain of the wood beneath it. This sheet of paste is then spread upon a cloth to dry for half an hour or so. It is then rolled up tightly by hand, as though it were music or drawing-paper, and cut into thin slices as though it were a sausage. These slices are then deftly separated with the fingers, with the resulting appearance of *spaghetti,* save that the threads are square-sided, and not round. These are then put into boiling salt water and cooked for ten minutes or so, drained, and served up with one of the customary

sauces. It is a very excellent dish, but the closest possible ritual must be observed in order to get it at its best.

It was here at Levanto, after visiting Porto Venere and the gay town of Spezia, with the excursion steamer and the attendant thoughts of Byron and Shelley, that we felt that our tour had really come to an end. We had planned to get as far as this; it was something to have carried out the plan. At Porto Venere one was definitely a tripper and no longer a vagabond. There was yet that walk in view from Bardonecchia over the Col di Rho which I have already described, but so far as Liguria was concerned curiosity was for the moment appeased. It had, to be honest, and on the whole, been a singularly comfortable vagabondage, and not always an energetic one. It had been amazingly inexpensive. During six weeks, it is worth repeating, there were four days on which rain fell. (In the summer and autumn of 1926 I spent four months in Liguria, and during that time there were again four rainy days.)

One further and abiding memory connected with that tour I cannot leave unmentioned. I had crossed from Havre to Southampton. I was not going to London, and could not therefore take advantage of the restaurant-car on the boat-train. I had to hurry in order to catch a local train to Eastleigh on my way to Salisbury. Nothing was obtainable at Southampton itself, the refreshment-room was just open, and

the ladies in charge of it were busy flicking the dust from the chairs on to the tables. No water was boiling yet; at Eastleigh I had twenty minutes to wait. It was the first opportunity I had since leaving the boat of getting any breakfast. And I had to go out of the station to a "good pull-up for carmen" before I could get so much as a cup of tea and a piece of bread-and-butter. But looking back to all that I have said about Italian food, a little abstinence, perhaps, may have been of some moral good to me. I don't know. It made me infernally ill-tempered.

CHAPTER XX

LIVING IN ITALY

FURNISHED VILLAS—PRICES—SERVANTS—TAXES.

LIVING on the Italian Riviera, in the sense of having a permanent residence there, is a much simpler matter than it is in England. In a land where sunshine is a more customary thing than clouds or rain there is much that English people can happily do without. Not that it is wise to ignore the possibilities of cold and wet, for it is not. But a great many things which are indispensable in a colder climate become needless luxuries in the part of Italy we are discussing.

Coming to practical details, the housing problem is not nearly so acute as at home. It is customary, as a rule, to hire houses "furnished," but that includes only a number of bare necessities, nearly always without plate or linen. Naturally, unless you are very certain of your ground it is better to rent a house for a time before expending a capital sum in purchase. It is not unusual for houses to be let for a term of years with an option to buy. A great many of the modern villas in the places more frequented by English and Americans, such as Rapallo, San Remo,

Bordighera, and Alassio, are ready to step into, having hot and cold water, central heating, and so forth. But that is not the ideal of the strict individualist, who prefers his home to be as he wants it, and not as somebody else thinks he might want it. So that, for people of average means, the best procedure is to buy a little house in suitable surroundings, and to add to and improve it according to taste.

Of course, all business of the sort should be done through a solicitor; but the intending purchaser or tenant must be prepared to face a certain amount of delay over any transaction in a country where to-morrow will always do. But, make no mistake about it, Italians can work when they want to.

As to prices, rents vary from forty pounds a year upward. I know of a three-roomed cottage, with a well-matured garden on a hillside, near a town and the sea, which was bought by its peasant proprietor in 1924, lock, stock, and barrel, freehold, for what in English money came to thirty pounds. This he added to with his own hands and with casual help, as his means permitted, and the place is now as snug a little house, with eight rooms, sheds, and outhouses, as can be imagined. With an instance of that kind as a basis for calculation, the reader may judge for himself whether a modest dwelling in this part of Italy is feasible or not. Of course, things always cost more than you think they will, particularly if you rely on your own efforts in a foreign country,

with the language of which you are not perfectly at home. In 1923 I was offered a top flat over a small *cantina* in the country for ten pounds a year. This consisted of a sitting-room, two bedrooms, a kitchen and *loggia,* and a moderate-sized garden, laid-on water and electric light. Two years later I was offered a large patch of fertile hillside of ten or twelve acres, with half a dozen inhabited cottages, for a thousand pounds English. I know of quite tiny houses which make sixty or seventy pounds a year in rent, while a very fine villa with a big walled garden in an ideal situation at a fashionable resort was recently sold for £30,000. You take your choice, and you pay your money. The likelihood of cost is extraordinarily difficult to gauge. As elsewhere, you have to pay for fashion, but oddly enough you are not expected to pay for beautiy—that is to say that houses in what to English people are romantic and exquisite situations will cost much less than houses immediately overlooking a good cheerful railway or tram-line. The special attraction of the Italian Riviera is the ease with which things can be induced to grow there. Well I remember seeing a bare hillside which in less than a year was a Paradise of flowers. In two years fruit and vegetables in great quantity were added.

As already indicated in the foregoing pages, the problem of domestic service is not so acute as it is in England. The custom is to allow your cook to

do the daily marketing, and prudence makes a strict and definite rule of checking and paying your accounts day by day. The *cameriera,* or house-parlourmaid, is expected to wait at table, wash, iron, and sew. If your washing is sent out it is passed on to a *stiratrice,* or ironer, for the labour of laundry work in Italy is invariably divided, unless it is done at home. If you have sent some feminine garment of unusual beauty and grace out to be washed you will as likely as not meet it on its return, held on a coat-hanger by the *stiratrice's* girl before her like a banner. So exquisite a work of art must not be folded. However, it is much better, of course, as well as more economical, to have your washing done at home. Taxes are numerous, but on the whole light, and as they vary from year to year figures are misleading. You pay trifling sums on such things as bathrooms and hired pianos; where water is privately owned you pay for that, and on the whole it is rather dearer than the urban water-rates in England. Electric light, on the other hand, is very much cheaper. Very little coal is used, if any, in private houses. The usual fuel for warming rooms in stoves or open fireplaces is olive-tree roots; charcoal is mainly used for culinary purposes, and coke is also used for central heating. Taking one thing with another, with wages, cost of food, taxes, water, light, etc., the cost of living on the Italian Riviera, at a conservative estimate, is a shade more than in England before the War.

APPENDIX

It will be readily understood that in mentioning hotels in the ensuing paragraphs it is quite impossible to please everyone by individual recommendations. The hardened traveller will be delighted with the little inn at Fenestrelle mentioned in the foregoing narrative; others will not be delighted. Moreover, the best of hotels have their ups and downs. A good landlord dies or retires, his successor is less adroit in management than he; or, again, he may succeed in working up an English and American connexion by means of considerable improvement.

The matter of prices is also extremely difficult to handle. Not only do they vary as between hotel and hotel in the same town, and as between town and town (according as to whether it is a fashionable resort or not), but, for foreigners, a great deal of difference is to be expected from year to year owing to fluctuations in the rate of exchange. No more than the likelihood of approximate cost can be attempted here. Most hotels have inclusive *pension* prices—so much a day, including everything except wine, washing, baths, afternoon tea, and taxes, which last have varied during recent years, but which, when known, can be calculated ahead. Except in some of the very expensive hotels, servants expect no tips, 10 or 15 per cent. *servizio* being added to the bill. Unfortunately, the "market," as it were, is frequently spoiled by persons, never Italians though, who insist upon ignoring this excellent custom.

It is very important to abandon as speedily as possi-

ble the usual habit of English people of thinking in English money. The quick mental arithmetic which tells the tourist that a drive is going to cost him ten shillings instead of fifty lire is to be deplored. For people of moderate means, who must take what advantage they can of the exchange, this subtle difference is very real. They should get accustomed to considering prices in the money of the country.

Coming to actual figures, it will be seen in the narrative of my walking-tour that ridiculously small prices are occasionally given; but, for the most part, these apply only to those *alberghi* referred to above, where, except for casual meals, only the hardened traveller will really enjoy himself. At the average big hotel of the international type the charges are at present from about sixty lire a day upwards. At a good, average, and perfectly "civilized" hotel in a place that is not definitely fashionable (such, for example, as Diano Marina, Final Marina, or Levanto), the rates are from thirty or thirty-five lire. In giving these prices I have taken a somewhat pessimistic view in order that the reader should be pleasantly rather than unpleasantly surprised when he comes to pay his first bill!

The *soggiorno,* or tax upon visitors, varies according to the place. It does not apply to anyone staying under five days. It holds good for a year. At small places it is usually fifteen lire; at more favourite resorts it is thirty or forty lire. Upon arrival at an hotel or *pension* visitors must fill up a form, giving particulars of nationality, occupation, and so forth, which form is handed to the police by the hotel-proprietor.

Persons staying in private houses must register themselves at the local *municipio* if they are remaining in Italy for more than two months.

It should be noted that current information with regard to all prices, taxes, etc., can always be obtained from any office of the Italian State Railways.

The following table, provided by the I.S.R., enables the reader to calculate equivalents in Italian currency where such a course is unavoidably necessary.

Rate of Exchange for £1	Italian Amounts and English Equivalents (In American currency, one shilling is approximately 24c; one pence, approximately 2c.)							
	L. 35	L. 40	L. 45	L. 50	L. 55	L. 60	L. 65	L. 70
Lire	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*
100	7 0	8 0	9 0	10 0	11 0	12 0	13 0	14 0
95	7 5	8 6	9 6	10 7	11 7	12 8	13 9	14 9
90	7 9	8 11	10 0	11 2	12 3	13 4	14 6	15 7
85	8 3	9 5	10 7	11 10	13 0	14 2	15 4	16 6
80	8 9	10 0	11 3	12 6	13 9	15 0	16 3	17 6
75	9 4	10 8	12 0	13 4	14 8	16 0	17 4	18 8
70	10 0	11 5	12 11	14 4	15 9	17 2	18 7	20 0
65	10 10	12 4	13 11	15 5	17 0	18 6	20 0	21 6
60	11 8	13 4	15 0	16 8	18 4	20 0	21 8	23 4

There is no difficulty at all about changing English and American currency notes in Italy, but as most people prefer not to carry large sums about on them, it is as well to get letters of credit, so that cheques may be cashed as required, on the spot. This is easily arranged through Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son, Ltd., wherever they have offices, or through the Banca Commerciale Italiana, who have a branch in the London office of the Italian State Railways, at 16 Waterloo Place, S.W. 1. This office will also undertake arrangements for the registration and insurance of baggage.

It cannot possibly be too strongly emphasized that the worries of travel are greatly mitigated by taking a minimum of luggage. Two suitcases are allowed free,

both in France and Italy. Trunks can be registered through to the Italian frontier, and in some cases beyond it. All registered baggage must be paid for in Italy, but at very low rates. In England and France 66 lb. go free of charge.

Village of Mont Cenis. (6893 feet. Hôtel du Lac: open from the second week in June till the end of September.) A summer resort only. There is a motor-bus service to Turin *via* Susa. A fine lake with trout extends from the village toward the frontier. The scenery is superb, and there are masses of wildflowers. The building now used as barracks was a hospice erected by Louis the Debonair. Mont Cenis forms the boundary between the Cottian and Graian Alps. The road was built by Napoleon between 1803 and 1810. There was at one time a light railway running beside it for a few years before the opening of the tunnel in 1871. The engines were driven by English drivers.

Susa. (1640 feet. On a branch-line from Bussoleno. Albergo del Sole.) A garrison town of great antiquity, the Roman Segusio, made by Nero the capital of a province. The triumphal arch, erected by Marcus Julius Cottius, in honour of Cæsar Augustus about 8 B.C., is considered the third finest. There is a minor Roman arch in ruins. The gateway into the town is called Porta Savoia, or del Paradiso. The cathedral of S. Giusto was begun A.D. 1029, founded by Olderico Manfredi II. There are Gothic choir-stalls, two interesting door-knockers of the eleventh century, and a bronze triptych of 1358 in *niello*. In the Chapel of the Virgin is a twelfth-century wooden gilt statue of Adelaide, Countess of Savoy. The eleventh-century font is

cut out of a single block of green marble. There is a particularly fine campanile, the spire of which is sheathed in copper. There is a finely carved doorway. The fortifications were dismantled by Napoleon in 1796, but the old castle of de Bartolomeis and the fifth-century walls are still remaining.

Excursions. By motor to *Mont Cenis* from May till October. In winter this bus goes up to the pass one day and returns the next. The continued journey *via* Lanslebourg to *Modane* is made only during July, August, and September.—Walk to *Chiomonte* (*q.v.*).—A long walk, seven or eight hours, over the Col de Fenêtre to *Fenestrelle*.—Walk to *Roccia Melone* (11,605 feet), in nine or ten hours, on the summit of which is a fourteenth-century chapel built by Bonifacio Roero d'Asti, who was captured by the Mohammedans, and who vowed if he escaped safely to found the chapel in honour of the Virgin on that spot. There is an annual pilgrimage to this chapel from Susa.—Walk (three miles) to *Novalesa,* an abbey founded by Abbo, a noble of Susa, in about A.D. 726. It was ruined by the Saracens two centuries later, and rebuilt in 1712.—To *Venaus* (about three miles). Here are fine pictures in the parish church by Rubens and Caravaggio.

Chiomonte. (2225 feet. On the Doria Riparia, between Susa and Oulx railway-station. Albergo Vittoria.) A highly picturesque village of great antiquity in beautiful mountain scenery. There are several fine fountains, carved beams on the outside of houses, and an interesting church, with a double gallery and much seventeenth-century woodwork, including a fine dated pulpit. The campanile was built in 1482. There is a font of green marble. There is also a little church dedi-

cated to S. Caterina with a particularly interesting door, having slim Lombardic pillars on either side. The peasants wear a distinctive costume.

Oulx. (3500 feet. Albergo Commerciale.) A centre for winter sports and, in the summer, for climbing. The surrounding country is extremely beautiful. Very cold in winter.

Excursions. By motor-bus to *Cesana,* and over the French frontier to *Briançon.*—By train or walk to *Salbertrand,* where there is a remarkable sixteenth-century church.—Walk over the mountain, by the Col de l'Assietta, to *Fenestrelle* (*q.v.*).—Walk, by Salbertrand, to the *Col de Clapier.*—Walk to the *Col de Coteplane.*—Walk to *Savoulx,* where there is an interesting sixteenth-century church, with a finely carved door and elaborate lock-plate. Thence to *Beaulard* and *Bardonecchia.*

Bardonecchia. (4305 feet. At the Italian end of the Mont Cenis tunnel—eight miles in length. Albergo delle Alpi, and others.) A good centre for Alpine climbing and for winter sports. There are a number of passes over the mountains in the neighbourhood, the best known being the Col de Frejus and the Col di Rho to Modane and the Col de la Saume to Briançon. The surrounding country is of great magnificence, carpeted with flowers in summer, and affording incomparable scenery on all sides.

At the old village of Bardonecchia, a mile from the station, there is a fine old church with admirably carved choir-stalls.

Cesana. (4464 feet. On the bus route from Oulx over the frontier to Briançon, and on the road from

Oulx to Sestrières made by Napoleon.) A centre for rock-climbing. There is little of interest in the place itself, but the surrounding country is beautiful.

Sestrières. (6631 feet. Hôtel Sestrières, open in summer, and its *annexe,* Albergo Baraccone, which is always open.) The views from the Col are very fine, and in the summer the surrounding mountain-sides are covered with wildflowers. There are practically no houses but the big and small hotel.

Fenestrelle. (3785 feet. Between the Col de Sestrières and Perosa. Albergo Rosa Rossa.) There is an important fort here, which guards one of the chief approaches to Piemonte; it is also a military prison.

Excursions. To *Pragelato,* a Waldensian village about half-way to Sestrières. The women wear a distinctive headdress, and the place is famous for honey. —By the Col de la Fenêtre to *Susa,* about five hours' walk. By this route magnificent views are to be seen, and in the summer masses of wildflowers.—By the Col de l'Assietta to *Salbertrand.*—By the Col d'Albergian to the head of the *Valle di San Martino.*—By motor-bus to *Perosa Argentina,* and thence by steam-tram to *Pinerola* (*q.v.*) Perosa is a pretty little flower-decked town in a beautiful situation at the foot of the mountains on the river Chisone. Several fine valleys can be approached from here, notably that of San Martino.

Pinerolo. (1234 feet. Near the Chisone and Lemina valleys. Albergo Corona Grossa and Albergo della Campana; good *cafés,* restaurants, and shops.) This town, like most of Piemonte, often changed hands, and was the subject of frequent bargainings. Till 1696

the town was strongly fortified, with a citadel on the hill of Santa Brigida and a castle on San Maurizio. The city walls were built by Thomas I of Savoy. In 1078 the Countess Adelaide made Pinerolo over to the Benedictine abbey of S. Maria, which held it for nearly a hundred years. Thomas of Savoy captured the place in 1188, and in 1246 the commune formally recognized the supremacy of Savoy. In 1295 Philip, son of Thomas III, made Pinerolo his capital. Henry III gave it back to Emanuele Filiberto in 1574. Again, under the French Cardinal de Richelieu, the French language was imposed on the people, and many fortifications were built. There was a State prison here in which were incarcerated, among others, Fouquet and the Man with the Iron Mask. In 1693 Vittorio Amadeo bombarded Pinerolo and forced Louis XIV to withdraw from it, but not before the French had demolished the fortifications. Pinerolo is a garrison town, and there is a cavalry school there. Living is extraordinarily cheap.

Saluzzo. (By train from Turin, Pinerolo, or Cuneo; or by tram. Albergo Corona Grossa and Albergo del Gallo.) The cathedral has been modernized, but contains a large fifteenth-century crucifix and other objects of interest. The chief attraction of the place is architectural, there being a number of fifteenth-century houses of considerable merit. These include the Casa della Chiesa, with a tower, and the Casa del Giureconsul, now the municipal museum. The church of S. Giovanni is French Gothic, and contains tombs by Benedetto Briosco and other artists. There are finely carved choir-stalls and some beautiful cloisters. The church of S. Bernardo is of the fourteenth century.

The palace of the Marchesi di Saluzzo, restored early in the nineteenth century, is now a prison.

Excursions. By bus or train to *Manta.* Here is the castle of the Marchesi di Saluzzo della Manta, built in the fourteenth century. There is a great hall which contains frescoes of considerable interest, portraying events in the life of the Marchese Tomaso II. Near by are a number of other fine old houses.—By train to *Verzuolo.* This has a castle of the Counts Mola Larisée, which was rebuilt in 1377 from the ruins of an older building belonging to the Marchesi di Saluzzo. It has a number of towers, square and round. It was considered to be impregnable. Queen Maria Teresa, widow of Emanuele I, spent the last years of her life here. There are other houses of the fifteenth century and an old market-place.—*Villanovetta,* which is surrounded by medieval walls with turrets. This is said to have been the home of Griselda, the legendary shepherdess who became Marchese di Saluzzo in the eleventh century. She has ever been held up to posterity as a model of wifely fidelity, and is said to have inspired Petrarch and Boccaccio.

Cuneo. (At the confluence of the Stura and the Gesso, a junction of several railway-lines. A large and important commercial town of Piemonte. *Hotels:* Nuovo Belvedere, Nazionale, Barra di Ferro, and others.) There is a considerable trade in silkworms and chestnuts. The town stands on a low, abrupt plateau. In the Piazza Virginio a market is held. On one side is the fourteenth-century *Loggia* of the grain-merchants and the church of S. Francesco, which has a fine Gothic doorway.

Excursions. To Caraglio, and thence by bus to *Pradleves*.—By bus, over the frontier, to *Nice*, through *Limone* and *Tenda*.—Up the valleys of the *Gesso* and *Stura*.—By bus or train to *Borga San Dalmazzo*. This little town, called by the Romans Urbs Pedona, lies at the confluence of the Gesso, Stura, and Vermanagna; it was once approached through four gateways. The sixteenth-century church is now a warehouse. There are a fourteenth-century tower and interesting frescoes of the fifteenth century in the church of S. Giovanni Battista. There are fine pine-woods in the neighbourhood, and plenty of mountain scenery for which actual climbing is not necessary.

Limone. (3300 feet. On the railway between Cuneo and San Dalmazzo di Tenda, and on the bus route from Cuneo to Nice. Hôtel della Posta.) An ideal summer resort, or for winter sports, situated in a cup of the mountains. There is trout-fishing in the neighbourhood, and walks as well as climbs in all directions. An interesting Gothic church, S. Pietro in Vincoli, of 1360, contains fifteenth-century frescoes. There is a fine carved fountain in the town. Being within easy reach of the coast and frontier, Limone is one of the most convenient resorts for a variety of excursions in this part of Italy.

Tenda. (2674 feet. Albergo Nazionale.) On the route from Cuneo and Limone to Ventimiglia or Nice. A small town just below the Col di Tenda (6145 feet), situated at the point where the Maritime Alps end and the Ligurian Alps begin. The road over the Col was begun by Carlo Emanuele in 1591. A place of past importance, now somewhat dilapidated. The scenery is

very fine. The *duomo* has a magnificent doorway of the fifteenth century, with statues of Christ and the Twelve Apostles over it. There are two ancient gateways, north and south, in the higher part of the town, and the ruins of an old castle and tower. Tenda is a good centre for climbing and endless walks. There are innumerable wildflowers in the neighbourhood.

San Dalmazzo di Tenda. (2284 feet. Hôtel San Dalmazzo di Tenda.) A summer resort, chiefly frequented by Italians. There are pine-forests in the neighbourhood.

EXCURSIONS. Walk to *Briga,* where there is a sixteenth-century church, with frescoes.—*Vallone della Moneria,* by way of Casterino and Laghi delle Meraviglie (7545 feet), where there are rocks inscribed with prehistoric drawings.

Ventimiglia. (On the rivers Roja and Nervia. Albergo Tornaghi.) The Roman name was Albium Intermelium, and the town is situated on the Via Giulia Augusta, which runs to Albenga. There are ruins here of a castle of the Counts of Ventimiglia. Its possession was much disputed in the Middle Ages by the Genoese, the Dukes of Savoy, and the Counts of Provence. The cathedral and baptistry are built on the remains of a temple of Juno. The Municipio has a collection of Roman antiquities from Ponte Nervia, and the Romanesque church of S. Michele has a crypt. Two Roman milestones were found here, with inscriptions of the reigns of Augustus and Antoninus Pius.

EXCURSIONS. By motor-bus to *La Mortola,* where there is a famous private garden, open to the public on Mondays and Fridays, of 101 acres' extent. This

stretches down the steep hillside from the village to the sea, and includes every imaginable sort of landscape, from sheltered coves and broad expanses of lawn to precipitous crags, among which rare rock-plants are picturesquely grown. As a scene of beauty and a botanic collection La Mortola is unique. A little farther on the same road, close to the French frontier, is the village of Grimaldi, where there are caves of much interest. Arrangements for seeing these may be made with the landlord of the inn.—There is a bus service to *San Dalmazzo di Tenda, Valle Crosia,* and *Bordighera.*

Bordighera. (Among many hotels to be recommended are Grand Hôtel Angst, Hôtel Vittoria, Hôtel Splendid, Pension Jôlie, Riviera Pension.) There is a large English colony. English doctors and dentist. British Vice-consul. International library and museum. Electric tram to Ventimiglia and Taggia. The Via Giulia Augusta passes through. The late Queen Margherita had a villa here. There are large groves of date-palms, planted long ago by the Dominicans.

Excursions (all within walking distance). The old watchtower, *Torre dei Mostaccini.—Dolceacqua,* where there are an old single-span bridge of 35 yards, and many picturesque houses with carved doors, wrought iron work, and dates carved over lintels. There is a fine ruined castle, a stronghold of the Doria family in the thirteenth century.—*Apricale,* an extraordinarily beautiful village built pyramid-fashion on a pointed hill.—*Isolabona,* where a parchment factory was instituted by the Dorias; one of the buildings is still standing.—*Pigna,* from which wonderful views are obtained, is a good centre for further exploration; the parish church has a fifteenth-century altar of interest.—*Gola di Gota,*

where are woods and innumerable spring flowers and ferns, some of great rarity.—*Perinaldo;* here is a valuable library of early astronomical works, some of which are unique.—At the church of *Soldano* near by there is an altar-piece by Brea.—Among other places worth seeing are *Ponte Nervia,* where there are the remains of a Roman settlement, including a theatre, *Castel' Vittorio, Buggio, Monte Grai, Monte Toraggio, Monte Ceppo, Bajardo,* and *San Bernardo.*

Ospedaletti. (*Hotels:* Metropole, Suisse, de la Reine.) Once a small fishing-village, the place now exists solely as a resort for foreigners and a sort of *annexe* to San Remo. Flowers are grown here in quantities for market. It is much quieter than San Remo, and moderately expensive. The hills rise straight from the sea, but once climbed there are good walks inland.

San Remo. (*Hotels:* Riviera Palace, de Londres, West End, Morandi, Bristol, and many others. The majority of the big hotels are closed in the summer, though some, including the Milano, Croce di Malta, Cosmopolitan, and Excelsior, remain open.) San Remo is not a cheap place, but is thoroughly modern. There is no beach, and some distance must be traversed before comfortable bathing can be had. There are golf-links, and an excellent club. English schools, churches of all denominations, doctors, dentist, chemists, nursing-home, tourists' agencies, British Vice-consul, and American Consular Agent. Several cosmopolitan restaurants and tea-shops. First-rate modern water-supply. Flats and villas are nearly always to be hired. (Agent, Messrs. Heywood.)

The old part of the town (Città Vecchia) has a

twelfth-century church, and is exceedingly picturesque, having many narrow alleys, archways, and houses approached by steep flights of steps. The Palazzo Borea D'Olmo is a fine fifteenth-century house with an imposing staircase. Donkeys and mules, as well as motors and horse-carriages, can be hired, and the country around abounds in beautiful scenery, with masses of flowers, and in some places rhododendrons. There are several good roads.

Excursions. Walk to *Madonna della Guardia,* on Cape Verde, returning by Poggio, famous for its wine. —To *San Romolo,* an old hermitage, and on to *Monte Bignone,* whence there is a fine view on clear days of Corsica and the Maritime Alps, returning by Piano del Re, Bajardo, and Ceriano.—By way of San Romolo to *Bordighera,* passing the villages of Seborgo and Sasso. —Electric trams to *Taggia and Ospedaletti (q.v.).*

Taggia. (On the river Argentina, Albergo d'Italia.) The railway-station of this name is situated strictly at Arma di Taggia on the coast, the ancient town being two miles inland. At Arma many acres are under cultivation with flowers for market. Taggia is said to have been an Etruscan settlement, and there are many features of archæological and architectural interest. The place was in early times associated with the families of Lercaris and Curlos, one of the latter having been Lord High Chancellor of England in the fourteenth century. The Dominican convent of S. Maria della Misericordia was the home in the fifteenth century of a number of artists of some distinction. There are interesting pictures in the convent church. Giovanni Ruffini, the novelist, author (in English) of *Dr. Antonio,* lived here in the 'seventies and 'eighties of

last century. This book first attracted English attention to San Remo, and was the foundation of its reputation as a health resort. By an ancient custom, Lees informs us, the peasants of Taggia leave plates of fruit on their doorsteps when they go to work, trusting to the honour of passers-by to leave a coin for any fruit they may help themselves to.

EXCURSIONS. By bus to *Triora,* a most interesting village, where the houses are built one on top of another, and approached by subterranean passages cut in the rock, and thence to *Pieve di Teco* (*q.v.*).—*Bussana Vecchia,* a village still completely ruined and depopulated by the earthquake of 1887, whence there are beautiful views. There are a number of old villages and individual houses in the neighbourhood to be seen in every direction.

Porto Maurizio. (Now known with Oneglia, adjoining, as Imperia, on the river Impero, Hôtel Riviera Palace.) Frequent buses to Oneglia, one mile. An interesting old town built on a cone-shaped hill and round a wide harbour. It is full of ancient houses, including the big rambling *palazzo* near the top of the hill where Mazzini hid from the police.

EXCURSIONS. By bus to *Caramagna,* where for a short time Van Dyck lived. There is a picture of St. Anna painted by him in the parish church. Near by at Montegrazie, in the fourteenth-century church, is a *Holy Family* by him. Caramagna is on the way to Prelà, where the bus stops. From here are fine walks.

Oneglia. (Grand Hôtel, buffet at station, numerous *cafés* and restaurants, English baker.) The town is of little antique interest except as the birthplace of

Andrea Doria in 1466. It is a market-town of some importance, and has a small port. The place is well worth a visit, if only to see the remarkable collection of old vehicles which daily come down from remote villages in the hills. Some of these are undoubtedly over a hundred years old.

EXCURSIONS. By motor-bus to *Ormea* (2400 feet), passing Pieve di Teco and Colle di Nava. This is a full day's trip, but it is convenient to stay at Ormea (Grand Hôtel, Hôtel des Alpes, Hôtel Pension Anglais) in the summer, whence there are many walks into the surrounding country, and climbing expeditions for which guides can be obtained. It is an ancient and picturesque town. The mountains are rich in Alpine plants of many kinds. Thence by train to *Garessio*.—By bus to *Pieve di Teco*, and thence to *Albenga* (*q.v.*).

Diano Marina. (On the Cornice road. Station with buffet, Hôtel du Parc and Hôtel Miramare.) There is a small English colony. English doctor and chaplain during the winter season. Twenty minutes by train from Alassio, and about an hour from San Remo. First-rate bathing.

EXCURSIONS. There are many interesting and beautiful walks to be taken from Diano Marina. There are no roads inland that go farther than three or four miles, as, for example, to *Diano Arentino* and *Riva Feraldi*. There is a great variety of flowers in the spring. The summit of *Mont' Evigno* is reached in about four hours on foot.—The *Torre dell' Arpisella*, on the top of Capo Berta, is within an easy walk, and affords magnificent views.—*Cervo* is distant about two and a half miles along a flat stretch of the Cornice road, bordered by some interesting old houses and gardens.

A few minutes' digression is well worth while to visit the picturesque village of *Madonna della Rovere,* which was mostly destroyed in the earthquake of 1887. Cervo itself is an ancient straggling village, which rises steeply, tier on tier, from the sea, and is full of fine old houses, now much fallen into decay. Part of its walls remain, and on the rocks by the sea there is one of the ruined towers, numerous on this coast, built in the Middle Ages as a fortification against the Saracen marauders.—A few miles farther east a mule-track from the road leads to the little-known hill-village of *Rolle,* where there are an ancient castle in good preservation (part of it is still inhabited) and a fine Renaissance gateway and church-tower. There are other points of architectural interest.—Below Rolle to the east lies *Andora* station, and where the road crosses the railway-line is an excellent country inn, the Albergo della Posta. The church at Andora Castello, about two miles up the valley, has a beautiful doorway, and is otherwise extremely interesting. Beside it stand the ruins of the Castello Clavesana, an ancient stronghold which occupies nearly the whole top of the hill. In the valley below Andora Castello is a Roman bridge.

Alassio. (*Hotels,* among many others: Salisbury, Norfolk, Méditerranée, Palace.) It is possible to book through from London. There is a large English colony. The Anglo-American Agency, close to the station: banking, general inquiries regarding travel, hotels, apartments, etc., agents for villas. English school, doctors, and chaplain; English-speaking chemists and dentist. First-rate English library and club. Tennis-club. Foreign tobacconist. Excellent bathing.

Alassio has no authentic history; though the name is

said to be derived from Alassia, daughter of the Emperor Otho.

Excursions. Walk to *Capo Sta. Croce*, in the hills. Here are the remains of a Roman road, the Via Giulia Augusta, which joined the Via Aurelia at Albenga.—Walk to *Monte Pisciavino* (1960 feet), *via* Solva or Vegliasco; descent by Monte Pignone to Albenga.—Walk from *Moglio* (excellent wine) to the chapel of the *Madonna della Guardia* on Monte Tirasso (superb views).—Drive to the *Gap,* where the road ends overlooking Stellanello.—*Laiguelia,* walk to lighthouse, semaphore-station, and back by Colla Michele.

Albenga. (Hôtel Albenga.) Lies on the seaboard of the plain of Centa, at the delta of the rivers Arroscia, Centa, and Neva. It is of Roman origin (Albium Ingaunum), is compact and walled. In the Gothic cathedral there are very fine fifteenth-century manuscripts, a breviary with the arms of the Bishops of Albenga, and other finely illuminated work. Runes are carved over the main door. The façade of the cathedral and adjoining baptistry are of the fifth century. The baptistry is approached by fourteen downward steps—one step for each century since it was built; it now forms a small museum of considerable archæological interest. The high tower connected by an arch with the cathedral was built in 1453, and is known both as the Torre Sotto Prefeturra and as the Torre dei Griffi. Other towers in Albenga were demolished after the earthquake of 1887. The loftiest of the red-brick towers is the Torre del Caretto di Balestrino. The Ponte Lungo is attributed to the Emperor Honorius. It is half buried, and the river Centa, over which it was

built, now runs past the south of the town. Napoleon made his headquarters here in 1796.

Excursions. Walk or drive to *Villanuova,* about four miles, passing the ruined castle of S. Fedele. Villanuova is surrounded by a medieval wall with towers at frequent intervals. On the return journey cross the river here to *Garlenda.* In the church are some good pictures, including a Domenichino and a Poussin.—Motor-bus route to *Pieve di Teco,* connecting with another to *Ormea,* by Colla di Nava, and returning to *Oneglia.*—Through Zuccarello to *Garessio* (by motor-bus), over the pass of San Bernardo (hotel). Garessio (Albergo Leone D'Oro, and others) stands 1900 feet in an open valley, is famous for its flowers, and is a recognized summer resort.—At *Nava,* approached by a drawbridge, there is an interesting cavern with stalactites.—There are many little villages well worth a visit north and north-east of Albenga, while along the coast-road you proceed by horse-bus, by foot, or by train to *Ceriale* (see Loano).

Loano. (On the river Nimbalto. Most conveniently seen by a day's excursion from Alassio or Final Marina. Train and horse-bus from Albenga and Final Marina. Small, good *cafés* and restaurants.) Architecturally and historically Loano, though not widely known, is a place of considerable distinction. The Palazzo Communale, designed in 1578 by Galeazzo Alessi, belonged to the Dorias; it has a magnificent *loggia* and walled garden. Near it is a pentagonal tower built in 1602. Ten minutes' walk brings you to the Castello, built by Oberto Doria, Admiral of Meloria, and added to by Andrea Doria in 1602. It was used as

a mint until 1670. Near the castle is the monastery of Monte Carmelo, built in 1603–9. This has a fine approach from viaducts on each side. Adjoining this monastery is a basilica with pillars emblazoned with the arms of the Dorias. In the crypt are some of the tombs of this family. On the way up from the station to the monastery is a good fountain. Generally speaking, Loano is full of delightful old houses.

Loano was the scene of two notable French victories separated by two hundred years, the first in 1602, the second under Massena in 1795.

Excursions. Train or horse-bus to *Santo Spirito,* whence two miles inland is the old village of Toirano, above which on the steep hillside is the cave of S. Lucia; at the entrance to this there is a chapel. From here there are beautiful walks among rugged scenery, the most notable being to the village and castle of *Balestrino,* which is still in occupation by the Marchese del Caretto.—*Ceriale* has an interesting church, the red brick campanile of which was recently struck by lightning and completely wrecked. This village is full of picturesque and ancient houses.

Final Marina. (On the river Pora. Hôtel Rustichelli. Buffet at station, good *cafés* and shops. Good bathing.) There is much of historical interest in and around Final Marina. A Spanish influence is to be observed in the architecture of the town, which was fortified by the Spaniards toward the end of the fifteenth century. The place became Genoese in 1713.

Excursions. There are interesting caves in several places in the immediate neighbourhood, and beautiful walks amid rugged scenery in every direction. *Final Borgo* lies a mile inland, a small, completely walled

town, with three gateways and the cathedral of S. Biagio; this has a fine tower, pulpit, and a number of intricately inlaid altars, and the beautiful chapel of S. Caterina. There are, too, some fine carved doorways.—A few minutes' walk from the north of Borgo brings you up a steep hill to *Castel Gavone,* one of the strongholds of the del Caretto family. Beyond this is the village of *Perti,* with the church of S. Eusebio and the little chapel known as the Cinque Torre.—Through Final Pia to the *Roman bridge "of the Fairies."*—A day's excursion by motor-bus from the station to and from *Calissano* (2160 feet; Albergo del Genio), by way of Melogno.—By train or walk to *Varigotti,* an ancient village of Saracenic origin. There is here an extremely picturesquely wooded headland, and good coves for bathing.

Noli. (Train or motor-bus to Vado or Final Marina. Albergo d'Italia.) The town is of great antiquity. Mr. Lees, in his *Wanderings on the Italian Riviera,* quoting Canon Luigi Descalzi, tells us that the place is supposed to be seven hundred years older than Rome, and that traces of three periods of primitive history have been found there. There were at one time seventy-two towers in this walled and fortified town, and the ruins of a considerable castle spread up the hill overlooking it. The chief point of interest is the church of S. Paragorio, built on the site of a pagan temple between A.D. 760 and 820. It was restored in 1888 by the architect D'Andrade, and is a good example of primitive Christian building. The doorway, with its fifteenth-century Lombardic columns, beautiful in itself, is strictly out of keeping with the archaic character of the rest. There are three tombs of the thirteenth

century, with contemporary frescoes. There are, too, frescoes inside the church, and beneath it is the crypt, used as a museum of Roman remains found there. There is an early thirteenth-century pontifical chair in the church. Noli is eminently a place for a day's excursion; the country inland is well worth exploration. Antonia da Noli, the discoverer of the Cape Verde Islands, was born here in the fifteenth century.—At *Spotorno,* the next station, there is an old castle and wild, pine-clad country of great beauty. There are several hotels open in summer, and good bathing.

Savona. (On the Litimbro. *Hotels:* Riviera Palace, Torino, Suisse. Station buffet, *cafés,* restaurants, good shops. English Vice-consul.) A place of great antiquity, occupied in the Second Punic War by Mago, brother of Hannibal, who deposited here the loot he had taken from Genoa. Of the Italian Riviera towns Savona is second in size only to Genoa. There is an early seventeenth-century cathedral, containing ornaments given to the earlier building, which was pulled down, by Pope Julius II (Giulio della Rovere), who had been born at Albissola near by, and from whose family were elected two Popes, while there were many cardinals and two princes of that name. The choir-stalls, beautifully carved and inlaid, are among other treasures. The streets are mainly arcaded, and the pottery, which has been famous since the early sixteenth century, is still largely made.

Albissola. (Next station east of Savona. Hôtel Pescetto.) Here Pope Julius II was born in 1443, the son of Rafaele della Rovere. He was Pope from 1503 to 1513, and a great patron of art. Pottery similar

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MEDIEVAL BRIDGE NEAR RIVAROLO

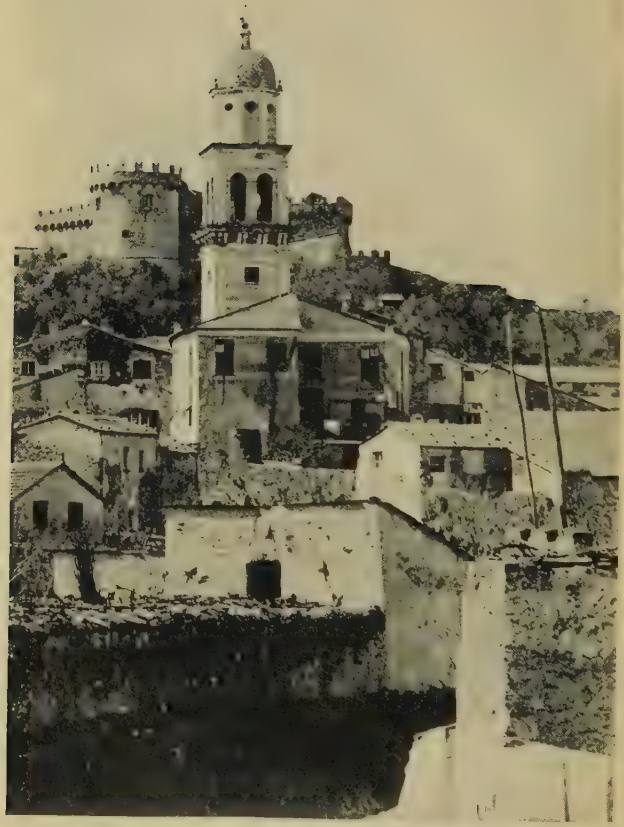

Photo C. E. Beeby

LEVANTO: CASTLE AND CHURCH OF S. ANDREA

to Savona ware has been made here from early times. The place is flat, low hills rising from two to three miles inland. The country immediately behind is beautiful. Albissola Superiore is distant about a mile; on the outskirts stands the Palazzo della Rovere. Other fine houses are to be seen in the immediate neighbourhood. Motor-buses to Savona, and through Albissola Superiore into the hills. Good bathing.

Arenzano. (Grand Hôtel Roma, Genoa, and others.) Situated on a narrow foreshore, with hills rising abruptly behind, covered with fine pine-woods. Chiefly an Italian summer resort; the surrounding country is pretty, the bathing excellent.

Genoa. (On the river Bisagno. Recommended hotels are, among others: Londres, Savoy, Aquila Reale (near the Principe station), de Gênes, Bristol (near Piazza de Ferrari). All the hotels in Genoa are comparatively expensive, but the first three are the more reasonable. A modest *albergo* in a good central position and warmly recommended is the Croce di Malta. English and American newspapers are on sale at the stations and several kiosks. There are, of course, plenty of international chemists, English doctors, and an English church, and places of worship of all denominations.)

"Genoa is universally known," wrote Mr. E. A. Reynolds-Ball and the late Dr. W. T. Beeby in *The Levantine Riviera,* "but it would be better if more of those passing through this city . . . would make themselves acquainted with its history, probably as interesting as that of any Italian city, except Rome." The fact that Genoa is a great port and a city of vast commercial

importance is apt also to make the traveller forget its great artistic attractions. Genoa is extremely ancient, for the place was subject to Rome as early as 200 B.C. The Via Postumia and the Via Aurelia both pass through it. The Porta S. Andrea was built in A.D. 936, the Embriaco tower in 1097. Later Genoese history circles round its great families, the Dorias, Spinolas, etc.

CHURCHES. The church of *S. Maria delle Vigne* is said to have been built by the Spinolas before A.D. 1000; the tower is twelfth- or thirteenth-century work. The ruinous church of *S. Agostino* is very interesting. *S. Donato* is a twelfth-century church, late Romanesque; while there are the little church of *S. Cosimo* and that of *S. Matteo,* founded in 1125, rebuilt in 1278. This is a Gothic church with a classical interior, decorated by Montorsoli, a pupil of Michelangelo. *S. Matteo* was the church of the Dorias, as *S. Maria Violata* was of the Fieschis. This is of the fourteenth century, but nothing of the interior remains. It is no longer used as a church. The cathedral of *S. Lorenzo* is beautiful and unique. Originally it was a Lombardic church of 985, rebuilt in the Romanesque manner about 1100. Gothic additions were made in 1307, and Renaissance decorations were done in 1567. The façade is of black-and-white striped marble (the Dorias, Spinolas, Fieschis, and Grimaldis having the exclusive right to use this style of decoration). *S. Lorenzo* would require a book to itself to contain an adequate description, but mention must be made of the chapel of *S. Giovanni Battista,* with its impressive screen. The cathedral of *S. Siro* was rebuilt in 1580. Perched high up in a commanding position is the church of *S. Maria di Carignano,* begun by Galeazzo Alessi, a friend of

Michelangelo and a great architect. The Sauli family was responsible for this. A very fine church built by the Lomellinis is that of *SS. Annunziata.* A little-known church is that of *Orregina,* just above the Principe railway-station, dedicated to the Madonna di Loreto. Inside is a supposed model of the dwelling of the Virgin at Nazareth. The tradition is that angels carried the house to Dalmatia in 1291, and thence to Loreto in Ancona.

Palaces. From the spectator's point of view the worst of the Genoese palaces is that, confined as they mostly are in narrow streets, it is impossible to regard them at a distance and thus to see their fine proportions at their best, as you can in more spacious cities. The *Palazzo Rosso,* open daily except Sundays and Tuesdays, is No. 18, Via Garibaldi, and was given, together with its art collection, to the city of Genoa by the Marchesa Brignole-Sale, Duchess of Galliera, in 1874. There are some magnificent Van Dycks in this palace. Nearly opposite is the *Palazzo Bianco,* also given by the same lady. Here are ten rooms full of objects of art, paintings, sculptures, and a wonderful collection of relics of Christopher Columbus, among which is an urn which contains some of Columbus's ashes brought from Santo Domingo in 1877. There are also autograph letters of Andrea Doria, Garibaldi, Mazzini, and Massena. At the *Palazzo Civico* (open daily), No. 9, Via Garibaldi, are some autograph letters of Columbus himself, and some relics of Paganini, including a violin which belonged to him. There is also a bronze tablet of 117 B.C. The *Palazzo Balbi,* No. 4, Via Balbi, has a small and very choice collection of pictures by Van Dyck, Titian, and Rubens. Among these is Van Dyck's portrait of Philip II of Spain, the

head of which was painted by Velasquez. The mixed authorship of this painting is due, it is said, to the fact that Senator Balbi was painted by Van Dyck, but when he was subsequently banished from Genoa as a traitor Velasquez was commissioned to paint out the head and replace it with the portrait of the Spanish king. The *Palazzo Durazzo Palavicini* (open daily), No. 1, Via Balbi, is remarkable for a staircase which is of so flimsy, though graceful, appearance that the story goes that the Marchese Mascellino Durazzo dared not tread upon it until the designer, Tagliafichi, had caused heavy loads to be carried up and down. There are some very fine pictures here, including the *White Boy,* by Van Dyck, and *Philip IV of Spain,* by Rubens. There is also a portrait by Tintoretto of Marchese Agostino Durazzo. The *Palazzo dell' Università,* at No. 5, Via Balbi, has a particularly beautiful courtyard and staircase. In the Piazza del Principe is the *Palazzo Principe Doria;* this was completed in 1529 by the architect Montorsoli. The gardens are beautiful, but in the days of Andrea Doria they extended right down to the sea. Here, in one of his galleys moored by the foreshore, Doria is said to have given a banquet to Charles V, and to have made a somewhat vulgar display of prodigality by pitching the gold and silver plate, when used, over the side. But the prodigality was a sham, for nets had been placed around the vessel. The *Palazzo S. Giorgio* in the Piazza Caricamento was, from the fifteenth century down to the beginning of the nineteenth, the headquarters of the Bank of St. George, which virtually provided the Government of Genoa, and even maintained an army of its own. This palace is full of interest. The upper hall has a number of lifesize statues of famous Genoese, which, in these days of the sales

of honours, once more cements the trite reflection that human nature remains unalterable. These statues vary from a half-bust to the whole figure seated, and were erected in memory of worthies on a strictly commercial basis. When you died your memorial corresponded to your benefactions.

From the briefest note about Genoa cannot be omitted some mention of the Via XX Settembre, which, taken as a whole, is one of the most impressive modern streets in Europe. It descends from the Piazza de Ferrari towards the Brignole station down a slight hill, and is crossed near the bottom by a magnificent bridge. The street is full of excellent modern shops, among which are several pastry-cooks, where you can buy cakes for which Genoa deserves a much better name than you would suppose judging from the Genoa cakes bought in England, and at least one tobacconist where you can buy several brands of English tobacco and cigarettes.

Portofino. (Station, Santa Margherita—three miles by motor-bus. Albergo Delfino, and, on a more imposing scale, the Hôtel Splendide, on the hill overlooking the village.) Essentially a place to stay at in the spring and summer, and to visit for the day in the winter. It can be very cold there. Portofino is the most beautiful place on the Italian Riviera. There is little of historic interest. On St. George's Day there is a *festa,* when, at night, the inhabitants form a procession headed by the parish priest, marching between the two churches, carrying relics. Fireworks, so arranged as to represent the dragon's tail, are lit on the hillside. There is a lighthouse at the extreme end of the peninsula, a quarter of an hour's walk from the village.

Parragi. Consists of a castle and a few houses with a small inn at the head of a little cove between Portofino and Santa Margherita.

EXCURSIONS. To *San Fruttuoso,* by boat or walk over the hill. The author of a well-known guide-book says that the journey from Portofino to San Fruttuoso can be undertaken in an hour, half an hour up and half an hour down again. I should like to see him do it! Here was the monastery of Capo di Monti. Lees tells us that the abbey is mentioned in a document of the year 904, and that Adelagia, wife of the Emperor Ottone II and daughter of King Rudolfo of Burgundy, presented the district to the occupants of the monastery under the Abbot Madalberto. Later it passed into the hands of the Dorias, whose tombs are here. It was Andrea Doria who built the tower in the sixteenth century.—*Camogli,* by boat or walk over Monte Telegrafo, a small harbour of some antiquity. The name is corrupted from Casa dei Moglie, "House of the Wives," since the men of the place were (and are) all sailors.—At *Recco* (the next station on the coast railway) lived Nicoloso da Recco, who discovered the Canary Islands in 1341.—From here there are several excursions by motor-bus: to *Chiavari,* by Uscio and Cicagna; to *Genoa;* to *Santa Margherita,* by Ruta, which is in the hills above, whence there are magnificent views.

Rapallo. (*Hotels:* Verdi, Bristol, Casino, among the more expensive; others include the Marsala, having a restaurant (first-rate Italian cooking) running out over the sea, Grand Hôtel Europe, and Albergo d'Italia. All trains stop here, and it is possible to book through from London. There is a permanent English colony,

English church, doctor, and library, foreign tobacconist, and international chemists.) Rapallo faces south, and with Santa Margherita occupies the major part of the Gulf of Tigulio. During the last twenty years these places have increased out of recognition. In a fairly quiet way it is one of the most popular resorts in Europe, and in the winter and spring months all nationalities are represented there. It is a recognized health resort. The town, some of which is old, is chiefly built upon arches, and there is a picturesque old castle now used as a prison on the foreshore. Lace is made here, and Zoagli, the next parish to the east, is famous for its velvet.

Excursions. Mostly on foot. To *Mont' Allegro* (2015 feet), a steep climb (Albergo Mont' Allegro). There is a church, founded in the mid-sixteenth century, which has been recently restored. There are magnificent views in every direction, much wild, unspoiled country, largely covered with ilex-woods, which extend along the hills to the east. The descent can be varied by passing through the village of Sant' Ambrogio or Manica di Lume respectively.—To *Ruta* and *Carevaggio*. The first of these is perched high, with views to Genoa and southward almost to Spezia.—To the *Sant' Anna* valley and the tower of *Val di Cristo*.—There are unending walks into the hills from Rapallo, and, like most of Liguria, these valleys and mountains in springtime are carpeted with flowers.

Santa Margherita. (*Hotels:* Continental, with large garden going down to the sea, Regina Elena, Miramare, and many others. Numerous *cafés,* restaurants, shops, foreign tobacconist, international chemist, cars and carriages for hire, motor- and horse-buses to

Rapallo and Portofino; also motor-bus to Ruta and Genoa.)

For excursions, see Rapallo, adjoining.

San Michele. (On the road between Santa Margherita and Rapallo.) Consists of a small cove, with a few fishermen's houses at the head of it, and an ancient castle. In the church is a damaged Van Dyck.

Zoagli. (On the way to Chiavari, by road and train. The Albergo Nave is quite moderate.) Is a quiet and extremely picturesque village in a small, shut-in cove, with the mountains rising immediately behind it.

Chiavari. (On the river Entella. Albergo dei Giardini. A good restaurant at the station, good *cafés,* and shops.) Chiavari is a commercial town, and the seat of a bishopric.

Excursions. *San Salvatore,* where stands the palace of the Fieschis, Counts of Lavagna, and an interesting church, begun in 1244 by Sienibaldi de' Fieschi, who was Pope Innocent IV, and completed by his kinsman Ottobono de' Fieschi, who was Andrian V. The façade is of white marble and black serpentine in stripes. There is a fine rose-window, and a Decorated tower with a low octagonal spire. The windows of the tower have small Lombardic columns, and there are black-and-white Lombardic pillars within the church, which is well worth a visit.—*Borzonasca* (nearly ten miles), a picturesque village from which there is a delightful walk up to *Sopra la Croce.* It is also on the bus route from Chiavari to Cabanne, from which Rezoalio can be reached on foot or by mule. This is a first-rate centre for trout-fishing.—By bus to *Cicagna* and *Uscio*

Photo C. E. Beeby

LEVANTO: LOGGIA PUBBLICA

Photo S. Lynch

LEVANTO: THE GATEWAY

inland to *Recco (q.v.),* on the way to *Genoa.—Santa Maria del Taro* (2340 feet), a resort for pilgrims in the summer.—By horse-bus to *Sestri Levante.—Borzone,* where there is an abbey founded in 1184 by Ugone della Volta, Archbishop of Genoa. The Benedictines had this abbey for four centuries, and the valley was called after it. There remains a fine tower of 1244, and some valuable thirteenth-century relics are to be seen in the church.

Sestri Levante. (Grand Hôtel Miramare.) A good beach for bathing. There is a small port on both sides of the isthmus, along which is a beautiful walk in the private gardens of the Villa Piuma, to enter which permission can be obtained. There is a good private collection of old pictures in the house of Dr. Vittorio Rizzi, which can also be seen on application.

There is an interesting castle built in 1134 by the Republic of Genoa on land belonging to the monks of San Fruttuoso (*q.v.*), who owned considerable tracts of land on this part of the coast.

Excursions. By motor-bus to *Spezia,* by the Baracca Pass.—By motor-bus to *Carodano* and thence by another bus to *Sesto Godano,* in the chestnut-woods (a small *osteria* for meals).—Thence by horse-bus to *Velva;* thence by motor-bus back to Sestri (whole day).—Motor-bus to *Borgotaro* (summer only; this too is a whole-day trip).—By train to *Riva Trigoso,* a small bay and village, where there is a shipbuilding industry.—By train to *Moneglia,* where there are two ancient Genoese castles. Here the painter Luca Cambiaso was born in 1527. At the church of S. Croce here on one of the external pillars is an *alto rilievo* in marble of A.D. 1290.—By train to *Deiva,* where there is a very

fine beach for bathing. From each of these two last places Sestri Levante is within a walk along the Cornice road, which is here approached from the coast by a good track.

Levanto. (*Hotels:* Stella d'Italia, Palace, Grand, Nazionale, and, on the hill above the town, the Excelsior; all moderate and comfortable. Buffet at station, *cafés,* and shops. Levanto is a small town in a moderate-sized bay. Excellent bathing and beach.) The town is not as yet widely known to English and American visitors, but in a quiet and unsensational way it is as good a place as any from which to study Italian life and to explore in remarkably beautiful scenery. Places accessible by driving are few, but for people who are content to walk or ride on mules and donkeys there are innumerable expeditions of interest to be made. Levanto and the adjoining villages behind it are sheltered by a semicircle of mountains from the north, east, and west, the spurs of the hills coming down on either side of the bay. The climate is healthy both in summer and winter, and there is a plentiful supply of good water. Levanto was a place of some importance in early times. It was the seat of the ancient da Passano family, people of considerable power in the Middle Ages, and one of them—Giacomo da Passano—was ambassador from the Republic of Genoa to the Court of St. James's. In the sacristy of the parish church of S. Andrea there is a fine silver-gilt chalice presented to him by Henry VIII. The da Passanos, Tagliacarnes, and Massolas are ancient families who still own property in Levanto. Like other places along the Ligurian coast, Levanto was much harried by Saracens, and about the year A.D. 1200 the Levantese appealed for help to Genoa to build

walls to protect the place. This was done, and the castle, which is still standing, was added about 1265. In the wall is a very picturesque water-gate, beneath which the stream flows, and not far away is an ancient clock-tower.

Levanto became an ally of Genoa, and various dignitaries of the Banco di S. Giorgio built palaces in the little place. Figures of S. Giorgio occur frequently in the decoration of the houses and gateways there to this day. The Palazzo Pubblico, where in ancient times trials were held and punishments carried out, was built about the year 1245, and has serpentine pillars. Between this building and the church of S. Andrea is the oldest part of the town, where there are many interesting details, including *ardesia*—finely carved slate architraves and jambs about ancient doorways. The main portion of S. Andrea, built between 1200 and 1281, is Romanesque, but the façade is Gothic. It is of great interest, showing inside a wavering between the Romanesque and Gothic ornament. The tower is classical, having been added in 1621. The Piazza Cavour was originally the monastery of S. Chiara, founded in 1603 by Baron Cesare Zattera. One side was pulled down, and the buildings are now used as the Municipio, the Post Office, and the headquarters of the *carabinieri*. Above the town to the north there is a Franciscan monastery, the church of which, dedicated to SS. Annunziata, was built nearly a century before, in 1449. Here, over the altar of the Massola family, is a picture of St. George and the dragon, attributed by some to Andrea del Castagno and by others to a Ligurian master, Pier Francesco Sacchi. It was taken by the French in Napoleon's time and hung in the Louvre, but was subsequently returned. The church of S. Siro at Montale,

a village reached in an hour's walk or so from Levanto, used to be the mother church of the district.

Montale was probably a Roman station. Other villages well worth visiting in the immediate neighbourhood are Fontona, Legnaro, Chiesa Nuova, Lizza, Fossata, Casella, with the ancient house of the Taddeo family, while there is an extremely interesting church, to which pilgrimages are made, at San Soviore above Fontona.

Excursions. A particularly beautiful walk of about four hours through Montale to *Carodano,* on the main road below the Baracca Pass. From Carodano by motor-bus to *Spezia* in the east or *Sestri Levante* in the west.—Walk to the semaphore-station on the hill-top above the sea, overlooking the five villages known as the Cinque Terre.—A day's expedition to *Borghetto del Vara,* by Bardelone, on the river Vara, where trout-fishing is to be had.

Of the Cinque Terre, Monterosso has a very fine church with a good rose-window. The village is picturesque, and has a number of lemon-farms. At Corneglia the wine known as Vernaccia, referred to by Boccaccio, is still made. All five villages are famous for the Sciacchetra, a wine made from partially dried grapes, greatly improved by age. At Manarola there is a church of 1338 with a marble rose-window, which is unusual. Vernazza, mentioned as the "dirtiest village in Italy," has an interesting convent with cloisters high on the hillside. The fifth village is Rio Maggiore, from which there is a beautiful walk to Spezia.

Spezia. (*Hotels:* Croce di Malta, an old palace with a curious double staircase, Grand Hôtel d'Italia.) The town has early associations both with the Fieschis

TURIN: VIEW FROM THE RIVER

Photo Brogi

Photo E. N. I. T., London

LERICI

and the Dorias, and belonged to Genoa. In 1803 Napoleon considered the project of fortifying the city and making Spezia a military port, but by the time of his fall only the road to Porto Venere was finished. There is little of architectural interest in the place, which, however, has a pleasant atmosphere of gaiety. There are good public gardens facing the sea, and a first-rate military band plays there on *festas*. Near by there are extensive oyster-beds. The Bay of Spezia is extraordinarily beautiful.

Excursions. By steamer (about half an hour) to *Porto Venere* (ancient Portus Veneris). There are the remains of fine walls, a gateway, and towers. The ruined church of S. Pietro, of black-and-white marble, is of Pisan architecture. The parish church of S. Lorenzo dates from the thirteenth century, and has very fine Renaissance choir-stalls of carved wood.—By steamer to *Lerici*.

Lerici. (Albergo delle Palme, moderate. By steamer from Spezia in about forty minutes.) Lerici (the ancient Erycina), situated as it is on the lovely Bay of Spezia, but not a place of very remarkable attraction in other respects, is interesting for its associations with Shelley, Byron, and Leigh Hunt. Shelley lived at the Casa Magni, half-way between Lerici and San Terenzo, and here among other works he wrote *The Triumph of Life*. "It is indeed a singularly bare and unpretentious building," Mr. Reynolds-Ball and Dr. Beeby tell us, "looking more like a quarantine station than a residential villa. The arcaded portion, almost overhanging the lake, plays an important part in the story of Shelley's life. This balcony formed an extension of the saloon, the only living-room, to which the

bedrooms opened directly, as on the *patio* of Spanish houses. This serves to explain the extraordinary incident about which all Shelley's biographers make merry, when the poet rushed in one day, fresh from his morning swim, . . . among his horrified guests assembled at lunch, the quickwitted Italian maidservant covering his retreat to the bedroom by means of the sheltering *ægis* of her apron. The present house, an ordinary rococo villa of the type so common on the Riviera, can scarcely be considered an improvement from an artistic point of view on Shelley's simple residence. The neighbourhood, too, has altered very much in character."

Charles Lever, the novelist, came to Spezia in 1852, and lived there off and on for five years, when, by Lord Derby, he was appointed British Vice-consul. This office was a sinecure, as was the consulship of Trieste, which the same minister offered to Lever in 1867. "Here," he said, "is six hundred pounds a year for doing nothing, and you are just the man to do it. Lever wrote *The Daltons, The Dodd Family,* and *Davenport Dunn* at Spezia, ironically treating the habits of English travellers.

Excursions. By motor-bus back to *Sestri Levante* by the Baracca Pass.—By slow train to *Rio Maggiore* and walk back by Biassa, through the woods.—By electric trams to various places in the neighbourhood. Lonely walks in the district are not recommended, unless taken by a party, owing to a somewhat undesirable element among the numerous workmen in that neighbourhood. Being a military port, cameras are not allowed, and visitors are warned to keep a respectful distance from the forts. There is, however, from the tourist's point of view, a good deal of undiscovered

country at the back of Spezia, and the valleys are strewn with the ruins of Etruscan cities.

Sarzana. (The next principal stop on the railway south of Spezia, but inland. Albergo della Viletta.) A place of great historical interest. It was the Roman Sergiana, and known also as Luna Nova. Tommaso Parentucelli, who ascended the Papal throne as Nicholas V (1447–55), was born here. He was the founder of the library of the Vatican. The Buonapartes, ancestors of Napoleon, came originally from Sarzana, their name having been Cadolingi, lords of Fucecchio, and Buonaparte having been adopted as a sobriquet. A branch of this family settled in Corsica in the thirteenth century, and from it Napoleon was descended. There are the remains of four fifteenth-century gateways with some of the wall, which is well preserved. The city was built by the Pisani in the thirteenth century, was sacked by the Florentines in 1486, and rebuilt a little later by Lorenzo de' Medici. The cathedral, in early Italian Gothic, was originally begun in 1204. There are two early altars by Leonardo Riccomani, and three fine round arches supported by octagonal piers. There is also a statue of Pope Nicholas V. The old castle is built in the form of a triangle, having towers and a deep moat around it.

Excursions. By train to *Carrara* (Hôtel Carrara). The quarries are approached by a "wire" railway, which is private property, and are well worth a visit, permission for which can be quite easily obtained.—*Massa,* by train, where the eighteenth-century ducal palace, now the Prefettura, was once the residence of Elisa Baciocchi, sister of Napoleon I. The church of S.

Francesco has good frescoes and some candelabra and a crucifix by Pietro Tacca.—By train to *Aulla,* near where, at the Villa Malaspina, Dante wrote part of *The Divine Comedy.* Over the gateway is the coat of arms, embodying a good example of canting heraldry —a barren thorn-bush (*Mala Spina*). There are several medieval castles in the neighbourhood.—By train to *Borgotaro,* whence in the summer a motor-bus runs back to Sestri Levante, through Varese Ligure.—To the ruined monastery of *S. Croce,* which stands on a promontory at the mouth of the river Magra. Here Dante is said to have entrusted to the prior the manuscript of the *Inferno* on the eve of his journey across the Alps.—To *Castelnuovo di Magra* and *Luni,* an old Roman town with the ruins of a vast amphitheatre and other buildings. Luni was attacked by the Saracens in the ninth century, and by the Normans in the tenth. It was destroyed by the latter in 1016.

Viareggio. (*Hotels:* Grand, Royal, S. Margherita al Mare, Pension Guidotti, Pine, and others.) A fashionable resort, visited by English and Americans in the winter, and by Italians in the summer for the bathing. There are fine pine-woods and a magnificent beach of great length. It was here that the body of Shelley was cast ashore and burned.

Excursions. By train to *Pietrasanta.* The Gothic Duomo of S. Martino was founded in 1330, and is built of the marble of Ceragiola. There is a fine rose-window, and many sculptures by Riccomani, Stagio Stagi, and others. The church of S. Agostino is near by.

Pisa. (On the river Arno. Near the station, Hôtels Minerva and Victoria, and Nettuna more cen-

Photo Alinari

TURIN: S. GIOVANNI

Photo Brogi

TURIN: GRAND STAIRCASE, PALAZZO MADAMA

tral.) Pisa is definitely one of the show-places of Italy, and apart from its famous buildings there is nothing to recommend it. The country round about is quite flat, and the town is some distance from the sea. Of the "sights," the best of which are all close together, the Leaning Tower, or campanile, is the most famous. This was begun in the year 1174 by Bonnano da Pisa. It was over thirty feet high when the ground gave and the tower tilted far out of the vertical. Bonnano tried to correct the slant, but failed. Guglielmo da Innsbruck raised the tower from the fourth to the seventh floor in 1234, and in 1350 Tommaso Pisano added the eighth and last floor for the belfry. The deviation from the vertical for a long time was 4.265 metres; but it is said now to be growing rather worse, and is approaching the danger-point. The ascent of the tower is an uncanny experience. The walls are double, with a stone spiral staircase, and each time you come to the overhanging side you have a feeling of being held back prior to a quick rush round to the higher side. The curiosity of this campanile is small compensation for the defect, which, æsthetically speaking, quite spoils what would otherwise be a unique and splendid building. The view from the top is extremely fine. The *Duomo,* which has a very beautiful façade, was founded in 1063, and was continued by Buschetto in 1099. It was consecrated by Pope Gelasio II in 1118, and was added to at the end of the twelfth century. A serious fire in 1596 badly damaged the *Duomo.* Inside, besides carved choir-stalls and many fine pictures, there is a bronze *lampadario,* or candelabrum, made by Battista Lorezo in 1587. This is supposed to have inspired Galileo with the idea of the pendulum from its almost perpetual motion, caused presumably by a light

draught. When the candelabrum was electrified the mere cord hanging down put an end to the movement. The baptistry was founded in 1153 by the architect Diotisalvi. The acoustics of this building are extraordinary. Unmusically speaking, if you sing three or four notes in quick succession the echo carries them upward and finally returns them, as it were, in a perfect chord. The *Campo Santo,* or ancient cemetery, was made toward the end of the thirteenth century. There is an exquisite little garden in the middle, surrounded by cloisters with slim Lombardic pillars. The walls are covered with celebrated frescoes.

Farther away there are some fine palaces, of which the *Palazzi Agostini, dei Cavalieri, del Commune, Lanfranchi,* and *Lanfreddi* are the best worth seeing. The *Museo Civico* has a very fine local collection. The University, begun in 1493, has a beautiful Renaissance court. There are, too, several old churches, notably those of *S. Sisto* (1089), *S. Caterina* (1253), *S. Francesco* (1342), and *S. Stefano dei Cavalieri* (1561).

Excursions. To the basilica of *S. Piero a Grado,* where St. Peter is said to have landed on this coast.—To *Pontedera* and *Calci,* both having architectural features of interest.—To the *Cascine Vecchi di S. Rossore,* now a royal hunting-box, originally a farm belonging to the Medici.

Turin. *(Torino.)* (Between the river Po and Doria Riparia. *Hotels:* Grand Hôtel Saita, Suisse Terminus, Albergo Corona Grossa, the old Casa Broglia, once a palace, built about the year 1500 (all expensive); Fiorina and Moderne (breakfast only), Orient (moderate). There are international chemists, English doctor and church. English, American, and other for-

eign newspapers and periodicals are on sale at the station and various kiosks in the city. The climate is variable, hot in summer, very cold in winter.)

The original and Roman name of the city was Taurasia, and later Augusta Taurinorum. The Taurini are supposed to have been a Ligurian tribe. In the fifth century it became the capital of the duchy of the Longobardi. Most of the Roman buildings were destroyed in the sixteenth century, and the fortifications—the earliest of the kind in Europe—were razed (to make room for a goods station) in 1857. Two years later Turin became capital of Italy, until in 1865 the seat of government was transferred to Florence, prior to its final removal to Rome. A great deal of the city is quite modern, and is built in straight streets, intersecting each other at right angles. In a short space it is impossible to give any but the barest outline of things to be seen in Turin. Of these the following are of chief importance:

The church of *S. Lorenzo,* built in 1634 by Guarini. It is noted for its fantastic dome. The *Cathedral,* founded in A.D. 602 by Agilulphus, King of the Lombards. The existing edifice was begun in 1492, and consecrated thirteen years later. It is not a building of remarkable beauty either without or within. Near by is the chapel of S. Sudario, or S. Sindone. This is lined with black marble, the capitals of the columns are of bronze, and the altar is richly ornamented; on the altar is a shrine containing the *sindone,* said to be the folds of the shroud in which Joseph of Arimathæa wrapped the Body of Christ. Other folds of this shroud are preserved at Rome and in France. That at Turin was brought from Cyprus in 1452, and is said to have been carried thither from Palestine during the Crusades.

The impression of the Body is said to have been maintained in this shroud. Between the cathedral and the Piazza Emanuele Filiberto is the *Palatine Gate,* which, with the ruins of the Roman theatre, is the only remnant of architecture of that period surviving. It is of brick, the two towers adjoining being medieval. The *Royal Palace,* on the north side of the Piazza Castello, was built in 1660 by Carlo Emanuele II and subsequently enlarged, not to its architectural advantage. Admission is free. The interior is gorgeous rather than beautiful, though there is a fine staircase of marble. On the ground floor the Royal Library has a very fine collection of books and manuscripts, including historical documents of great interest. There is here also a magnificent collection of drawings by such old masters as Mantegna, Leonardo, Michelangelo, and others. Near the State apartments is the Armoury, which is of first-class importance. The Italians of the Renaissance were superb armourers and makers of weapons, as our collections in England tell us, so that for intrinsic interest, apart from the historical, the Armeria Reale at Turin is well worth seeing. An especially notable specimen is the cuirass worn by Prince Eugene of Savoy at the battle of Turin, in 1706, which has three bullet-marks upon it. Beyond the Armeria is a fine collection of coins formed by King Carlo Alberto.

The *Palazzo della Reale Accademia delle Scienze* is a large building, of 1678, formerly a Jesuit college, which now contains the royal picture-galleries and the museum of antiquities. There is also a considerable library there. The Pinacoteca, or picture-gallery, containing a large number of good reliefs and coloured earthenware, in which are represented Luca della Robbia, Donatello, Giovanni Bellini, Claude, Domenichino, Fra

Angelico, Mantegna, Caravaggio, Botticelli, Paolo Veronese, Bordone, Raphael, Rembrandt, Rubens, and other masters, Italian and French, Flemish and Dutch. Three large halls are devoted to the Egyptian Museum, and there is also an important collection of Greek and Roman statues and busts and ancient Roman bronzes.

The *Palazzo Madama* is an old castle, founded in the thirteenth century, standing in the middle of the Piazzo del Castello. The principal front was added early in the fifteenth century. There are some good rooms decorated in the style of Louis XIV. Other palaces include the *Carignano,* built by Guarini in 1680, and the residence of Carlo Alberto before he ascended the throne, and the *Valentino,* built in 1633 in the manner of a French *château.* This has now long been used as a Government engineering school.

Magnificent views of the Graian and Pennine and Cottian Alps, including Monte Viso, the plains of Lombardy, and much of Piemonte, may be seen from the *Superga,* which is reached in about an hour by tram and funicular railway from the Piazzo Castello.

MOTOR-BUSES AND TRAMS[1]

Turin, Susa, Mont Cenis.
Mont Cenis, Lanslebourg, Modane.
Turin, Susa, Chiomonte, Oulx, Cesana, Sestrières, Fenestrelle.
Perosa, Pinerolo, Turin.
Oulx, Cesana, Briançon.
Pinerolo, Saluzzo.
Saluzzo, Cuneo.
Cuneo, Limone.
Limone, San Dalmazzo di Tenda (to Nice).
San Dalmazzo di Tenda, Ventimiglia.
Ventimiglia, Vallecrosia, Perinaldo.
Ventimiglia, Pigna.
Ventimiglia, Bordighera.
Ospedaletti, San Remo.
San Remo, Taggia (Arma di).
Taggia, Triora.
San Remo, Ceriana.
Rezzo (near Triora), Pieve di Teco.
Pieve di Teco, Albenga.
Porto Maurizio, Caramagna, Prelà.
Oneglia, Porto Maurizio.
Oneglia, Pieve, di Teco, Colle di Nava, Ormea.
Alassio, Laiguelia.
Alassio, Albenga.
Albenga, Castelvecchio, Garessio.
Albenga, Pieve di Teco, Ormea.
Albenga, Casanova, Lerrone.
Albenga, Ceriale, San Spirito, Loano.
San Spirito, Toirano.
Loano, Pietra Ligure, Borgo Vereggi, Final Marina.
Loano, San Spirito.
Pietra Ligure, Magliolo.
Final Marina, Melogno, Frassino, Calizzano.
Calizzano, Garessio.
Calizzano, Bardineto.
Final Marina, Loano.
Final Marina, Final Borgo.
Final Marina, Final Pie, Varigotti.
Noli, Vado.
Vado, Savona.
Savona, Millesimo.
Savona, Albissola.
Arenzano, Voltri.
Voltri, Genoa.
Genoa, Recco, Ruta, Rapallo, Santa Margherita.
Genoa, Nervi.
Recco, Uscio, Cicagna, Chiavari.
Recco, Ruta, Rapallo, Santa Margherita, Portofino.
Santa Margherita, Paraggi, Portofino.
Santa Margherita, Rapallo.
Rapallo, Ruta, Recco, Nervi, Genoa.

1 All times for these buses and trams vary considerably from month to month.

Chiavari, Borzonasca, Cabanne.
Chiavari, Cicagna, Uscio, Recco.
Chiavari, Lavagna, Sestri Levante.
Sestri Levante, Passo del Bracco, Carodano, Borghetto del Vara, Spezia.
Sestri Levante, Varese Ligure, Borgotaro.
Sestri Levante, Sesto Godano (by Velva).
Carodano, Sesto Godano.
Spezia, Sestri Levante.
Spezia, Sesto Godano.
Spezia, Pitelli.
Spezia, Porto Venere.

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